



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. *Parliament*

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

FIRST SESSION, 1920.

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EIGHTH PARLIAMENT.

FIRST SESSION.

Governor-General.*

His Excellency the Right Honorable HENRY WILLIAM, BARON FORSTER, a Member of His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Commonwealth of Australia.

* From 6th October, 1920.

Australian National Government.

Prime Minister and Attorney-General	..	(From 10th January, 1918.)
Minister for the Navy	..	The Right Honorable William Morris Hughes, P.C., K.C. The Right Honorable Sir Joseph Cook, P.C., G.C.M.G.
Treasurer	..	<i>Succeeded by</i> The Honorable W. H. Laird Smith (28th July, 1920). The Right Honorable Lord Forrest, P.C., G.C.M.G.
Minister for Defence	..	<i>Succeeded by</i> The Right Honorable William Alexander Watt, P.C. (27th March, 1918).†††
Minister for Repatriation	..	<i>Succeeded by</i> The Right Honorable Sir Joseph Cook, P.C., G.C.M.G. (28th July, 1920).
Minister for Works and Railways	..	The Honorable George Foster Pearce. The Honorable Edward Davis Millen.
Minister for Home and Territories	..	The Right Honorable William Alexander Watt, P.C. <i>Succeeded by</i> The Honorable Littleton Ernest Groom (27th March, 1918).
Minister for Trade and Customs	..	The Honorable Patrick McMahon Glynn, K.C.††† <i>Succeeded by</i> The Honorable Alexander Poynton, O.B.E. (4th February, 1920).
Postmaster-General	..	The Honorable Jens August Jensen.† <i>Succeeded by</i> The Right Honorable William Alexander Watt, P.C. (13th December, 1918).
Vice-President of the Executive Council	..	<i>Succeeded by</i> The Honorable Walter Massy Greene (17th January, 1919). The Honorable William Webster.†††
Honorary Minister	..	<i>Succeeded by</i> The Honorable George Henry Wise (4th February, 1920). The Honorable Littleton Ernest Groom.
Honorary Minister	..	<i>Succeeded by</i> The Honorable Edward John Russell (27th March, 1918). The Honorable Edward John Russell.
Honorary Minister	..	Appointed Vice-President of the Executive Council, 27th March, 1918.
Honorary Minister	..	The Honorable Alexander Poynton. Appointed Minister for Home and Territories, 4th February, 1920.
Honorary Minister	..	The Honorable George Henry Wise. Appointed Postmaster-General, 4th February, 1920.
Honorary Minister	..	The Honorable Walter Massy Greene. Appointed Minister for Trade and Customs, 17th January, 1919.*
Honorary Minister	..	The Honorable Richard Beaumont Orchard.**
Honorary Minister	..	The Honorable Sir Granville de Laune Ryre, K.C.M.G., C.B., V.D.††
Honorary Minister	..	The Honorable William Henry Laird Smith.††
Honorary Minister	..	Appointed Minister for the Navy, 28th July, 1920. The Honorable Arthur Stanislaus Rodgers.***

* Appointed 26th March, 1918.—† Removed from office, 13th December, 1918.—** Resigned office, 31st January, 1919.—†† Appointed 4th February, 1920.—††† Resigned 3rd February, 1920.—†††† Resignation from office gazetted, 15th June, 1920.—*** Appointed 28th July, 1920.

Senators.

(From 1st July, 1920.)

President—Senator the Honorable Thomas Givens.

Chairman of Committees—Senator Thomas Jerome Kingston Bakhap.

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|--|--|
| * Adamson, John, C.B.E. (Q.) | * Glasgow, Sir Thomas William, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. (Q.) |
| Bakhap, Thomas Jerome Kingston (T.) | * Guthrie, James Francis (V.) |
| * Benny, Benjamin (S.A.) | Guthrie, Robert Storrie (S.A.) |
| Bolton, William Kinsey, C.B.E., V.D. (V.) | Henderson, George (W.A.) |
| ³ Buzacott, Richard (W.A.) | Keating, Hon. John Henry (T.) |
| * Cox, Charles Frederick, C.B., C.M.G. (N.S.W.) | * Lynch, Patrick Joseph (W.A.) |
| Crawford, Thomas William (Q.) | Millen, Hon. Edward Davis (N.S.W.) |
| De Largie, Hon. Hugh (W.A.) | * Millen, John Dunlop (T.) |
| * Drake-Brockman, Edmund Alfred, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. (W.A.) | * ¹ Newland, John, C.B.E. (S.A.) |
| * Duncan, Walter Leslie (N.S.W.) | * Payne, Hon. Herbert James Mockford (T.) |
| Earle, Hon. John (T.) | ² Pearce, Hon. George Foster (W.A.) |
| * Elliott, Harold Edward, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., D.C.M. (V.) | ¹ Plain, William (V.) |
| Fairbairn, George (V.) | Pratten, Herbert Edward (N.S.W.) |
| Foll, Hattil Spencer (Q.) | Reid, Matthew (Q.) |
| ² Foster, George Matthew (T.) | ¹ Rowell, James, C.B. (S.A.) |
| * Gardiner, Albert (N.S.W.) | * Russell, Hon. Edward John (V.) |
| * Givens, Hon. Thomas (Q.) | Senior, William (S.A.) |
| | Thomas, Hon. Josiah (N.S.W.) |
| | * Wilson, Reginald Victor (S.A.) |

1. Appointed Temporary Chairman of Committees, 21st July, 1920. 2. Elected 13th December, 1919. Sworn 21st July, 1920. 3. Appointed Temporary Chairman of Committees, 26th February, 1920. * Elected 13th December, 1919. Sworn 1st July, 1920.

proposed expenditure there. I have already referred approvingly to the increased outlay in the Postmaster-General's Department, because there can be no objection to an expenditure which carries comfort and relief to those who have blazed the trail outback. I also desire some information on the increase in the Attorney-General's and Taxation Departments. The additional outlay in the latter is probably accounted for by the fact that its activities have been extended and the staff increased. Notwithstanding what has been said by the Minister for Home and Territories (Mr. Poynton), I believe that the Northern Territory under existing conditions is overmanned. If it is not, the Minister should tell us what duties the public officials are performing, because, apart from the work associated with the pastoral and mineral industry, operations are at a standstill. Australia House, which has been referred to in this Chamber on frequent occasions during the last few months, is also mentioned in the Estimates. Practically every visitor who has returned from Great Britain has a sad story to tell of the conditions prevailing in the Commonwealth's head-quarters in London, and the Government should give some details of the proposed expenditure.

I also desire to refer to the Department controlling shipping. I was particularly interested in that portion of the speech of the honorable member for Bourke (Mr. Anstey) in reference to shipping, and its bearing on the interests of primary producers in Australia. We are face to face with the actions of a Shipping Combine, which owns a very large proportion of oversea shipping, and which, by its strength, influences the price of every pound of wool, every bushel of wheat, every pound of butter or other produce we export. If it were not for that, I would be a very severe critic of the Government shipping policy. I have not been a warm supporter of this particular governmental activity; but my mouth has been closed because conditions have been such that opposition was not justified. I am anxious, however, to ascertain if we are doing right in pursuing a policy of shipbuilding in Australia. I have been informed that so marvellous have been

the activities in the shipbuilding yards in the Old World that at the present time there is a tonnage approaching 8,000,000 available above the pre-war standard, and that construction is still being continued. In these circumstances, we have to consider whether we are justified in extending our shipbuilding operations in Australia beyond the keels already laid down, and whether it would not be cheaper to stay our hands and risk a fall in the market. Our present Inter-State fleet is altogether inadequate, because Australian ship-owners have adopted the shrewd policy of not restoring their fleets to their pre-war strength until they learn whether ships cannot be purchased at a cheaper rate than that at which they can be built.

It has been said by the Leader of the Country party that the plan that has been adopted is the only effective way of making an impression upon the Government, and that statement has been repeated by other honorable members. In my opinion, it is the least effective way. To begin with, it is asking this House to perform an impossibility. It would be infinitely better if we were to pass the first item, and then, when we are dealing with particular items, to demand the fullest information from Ministers. During the twelve years I have been a member of this Parliament, we seldom have been able to perform effective work, because the Estimates have always been brought down so late. On one or two occasions they were not introduced until the following year, when every penny had been spent. When they have been presented reasonably early, we have either spent all the available time in aimlessly debating the first item, or devoted days and hours to trivial votes, allowing items involving an expenditure of millions to afterwards go through without any consideration at all. In regard to many Departments there is no hope of cutting down the Estimates. There is no possibility of that, for example, with respect to the Defence Department. The honorable member for Franklin, when moving his amendment, indicated that most of the money upon which he aimed at economizing could come from the Navy. I would remind

him that the press, in criticising public expenditure, has almost unanimously started out by giving the Government credit for exercising a fair degree of economy with respect to Defence. Generally, the press has approved the Defence Estimates, both naval and military.

The method employed in the South Australian Legislature, in the consideration of Estimates, is far preferable to that usually followed in the National Legislature. Year after year, in dealing with the Estimates in the State House, the procedure was to go through all the Departments seriatim, and the responsible Minister would be called upon, whenever required, to explain every pound set down. If there was any item concerning which the Minister was not in a position to furnish an explanation, the Committee would insist upon an adjournment until the particulars could be provided. That indicates the only effective way of dealing with Estimates, and the plan should be adopted here.

I believe that enormous results have followed the investigations of the Economies Commission, but we cannot be everlastingly appointing Commissions. We appreciate the work of that body. Taking a line from what it has accomplished, we should make a stand each year upon the Estimates, and let Ministers know that no items can pass until honorable members have been informed of all particulars required. The very existence of the Economies Commission has made the Departments generally more careful; it has made Ministers more careful also. Let us get right away from party feelings and dissensions upon the matter of national finance. It is criminal that there should be any such feelings engendered upon the subject at any time, but particularly now, when, unless we are exceedingly provident, there is bound to be a break down.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Is the Treasurer prepared to adjourn at this stage?

Sir JOSEPH COOK (Parramatta—Treasurer) [10.25].—We have had two days of this preliminary discussion, and the subject ought now to have been pretty well threshed out. I am anxious to get on with the Estimates at some time or other. If we adjourn now, shall we get this discussion over to-morrow, or will it

be carried on into next week? We cannot afford that. There are many important subjects to be taken in hand between now and Christmas, so that we are pressed for time. I am willing to make any reasonable arrangement, but must have some definite understanding concerning when the vote upon the amendment is to be taken. If the Government can be assured that a vote will be taken to-morrow, I shall not object to an adjournment at this stage.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY (Hume) [10.27].—There is no very great difference between the present amendment and that which was moved by an honorable member on this side a few weeks ago. I refer to the amendment for the reduction of a particular item in the Defence Estimates by £1,000,000. If my memory serves me aright, every honorable member of the Corner party, with one exception, voted against that amendment.

Mr. PROWSE.—I think the honorable member's memory is at fault.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—It may be. At all events, the great bulk of honorable members in the corner voted against the amendment, yet they would have the country believe that there is sincerity behind their present move to reduce an item of the Estimates by £1. I do not believe there is any sincerity at the back of their proposal.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Yet the honorable member intends to vote for it.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Certainly.

Mr. GABB.—We are sincere, if the Corner party is not.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The honorable member is going to vote for something which he is denouncing for its insincerity.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—A similar amendment was moved from this side not long ago, but the Corner party would not then support us, because evidently they thought that the Government were in some danger, but now they ask the country to believe that they propose to do something.

Mr. PROWSE.—It was an amendment on a totally different matter.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—The Corner party has been rightly charged with having failed to point to one item they are prepared to cut down.

Mr. PROWSE.—Not one item, but we are prepared to cut down half-a-dozen.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—No. Not one honorable member in the corner has intimated a single item his party are prepared to cut down.

Mr. PROWSE.—The honorable member has evidently not listened to the debate.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—At any rate, that charge was made against the Corner party by the Government. On the other hand, there was no misunderstanding about our amendment. We pointed to the expenditure on defence, and said that, although we were told that the last war was "a war to end war," an expenditure of over £9,000,000—the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Tudor) calculated it at £10,000,000, and said that before he had finished his task he would probably find another £1,000,000 in the Estimates—was foreshadowed on Defence, Naval and Military. I shall continue my remarks to-morrow.

Sir JOSEPH COOK (Parramatta—Treasurer) [10.33].—I am prepared to report progress on the distinct understanding that the vote will be taken at 2.30 p.m. to-morrow.

Progress reported.

JOINT COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.

Sir JOSEPH COOK (Parramatta—Treasurer) [10.34].—By leave, I move—

That the Joint Committee of Public Accounts, so far as the members of the House of Representatives are concerned, have leave to sit during the sittings of the House.

I understand that the Committee wish to proceed to Brisbane in pursuance of their task of investigating the purchase of timber areas and saw-mills by the War Service Homes Commissioner, and this motion is necessary in order that they may take evidence in Brisbane at a time when the House may be sitting.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

KALGOORLIE TO PORT AUGUSTA RAILWAY LANDS BILL.

Bill returned from the Senate without amendment.

SUPPLY BILL (No. 4) 1920-21.

Bill returned from the Senate without request.

House adjourned at 10.35 p.m.

10 F 2

House of Representatives.

Friday, 15 October, 1920.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson) took the chair at 11 a.m., and read prayers.

SUPPLY BILL (No. 4) 1920-21.

Assent reported.

SHORTAGE OF SUGAR.

Mr. LIVINGSTON.—Has the Minister for Trade and Customs read the statement in the newspapers that there is a glut in the sugar market in Cuba? I should like to know if he cannot bring some of the Cuba sugar here. It would relieve us a little if he did.

Mr. GREENE.—I have seen the report referred to, and I believe that it relates to a slump in the speculative market, which is concerned with the crop not yet harvested.

Mr. ROBERT COOK.—Is the Minister able to say when the shortage of sugar here will be relieved?

Mr. GREENE.—I have already told the House that the Government recently purchased a large quantity of white sugar, and that as soon as arrangements can be made for freight to bring it to Australia the shortage will be relieved.

NATIONAL SONG FOR AUSTRALIA.

Mr. GABB.—I ask the Prime Minister if he will take into consideration the advisability of having a national song for Australia?

Mr. SPEAKER.—By no stretch of the imagination can that question be regarded as one of urgency, and it is the rule that only urgent and important questions may be asked without notice. Important questions should go on the notice-paper. If questions are not important, they should not be asked at all.

MISSION OF SENATOR E. D. MILLEN.

GENEVA CONFERENCE.

Mr. MAKIN.—Has the Prime Minister seen the statement in this morning's newspaper to the effect that, because of certain circumstances that have arisen, the Geneva Conference is not to be held?

What is the intention of the Government regarding Senator E. D. Millen, who has left this country to attend that Conference? Will he be recalled, or how will he be employed when he gets to the other side of the world?

Mr. HUGHES.—The question reveals one of the causes of the appalling ignorance of mankind. The honorable member reads his newspaper as if the statements therein were Bible truths. The basic principle of a citizen should be disbelief in every statement that he reads in the newspapers. Those who write paragraphs such as that to which the honorable member has referred do not know where Geneva is, or what the Conference is for. They merely get a cablegram containing something about Geneva, and they make of it a statement such as the honorable member has read. The question is too silly to answer.

Mr. SPEAKER.—It is a well known rule of parliamentary practice that questions founded on newspaper statements are not in order, unless those asking them take personal responsibility for their accuracy.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. RYAN.—In this morning's *Melbourne Age* appears the report of some remarks made by an individual named Bavin, a third or fourth-rate lawyer, and a member of the New South Wales Parliament, who, I think, is known only because of his treachery to his late political leader, and his jealous stabbing in the back of a colleague who has recently been raised to the Bench of the Supreme Court of New South Wales.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Is the honorable member in order in making this bitter personal attack under cover of a personal explanation?

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honorable member is entitled to explain how he has been misrepresented, but he must not, under cover of the explanation, make a personal attack on some one else.

Mr. RYAN.—I have spoken of the character of the person who made this statement by way of showing how little to be believed it is. He is reported to have said that I, as a barrister, when a member of the Queensland Government, received in one year in fees the sum of £8,900. That is a repetition of a false statement made by a member of the Queensland Parliament named Fry, and

published in the press some time ago. I denied it in this Chamber earlier in the session; honorable members, no doubt, will remember the occasion. I should have expected that all members of Australian Parliaments, who are supposed to interest themselves in the affairs of the country, would have acquainted themselves with my denial. The statement of Mr. Bavin is entirely without foundation. Mr. Fry promised me that he would personally investigate the matter, and would publish a correction of the statement that he had made. I know that he conducted an investigation, and found that his statement was a gross misrepresentation of facts, but, so far, he has not made any public correction of it. I invite him to do so at the earliest opportunity, and before I take further action.

NAVAL STAFF CLERKS.

Mr. TUDOR asked the Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

1. In connexion with the proposed amending Public Service legislation, will he inform the House whether, in view of the statement made by Senator Pearce (see *Hansard*, page 3361) that military staff clerks were to be brought under the Public Service Act, naval staff clerks are to be similarly treated?

2. Are naval staff clerks under the provisions of the Naval Defence Act enjoying the same security of tenure as officers of the Public Service under the provisions of the Commonwealth Public Service Act 1902-1918?

Mr. HUGHES.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follows:—

1. This matter is receiving the consideration of the Government.

2. Naval staff clerks are appointed under section 41 (1) C of the Naval Defence Act 1910-1918. Their security of tenure is decided by the Minister on the recommendation of the Naval Board, and is, therefore, not similar in character to that of officers of the Commonwealth Public Service.

MR. ERNEST TILL.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY (for Mr. CUNNINGHAM) asked the Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

1. Is it a fact that one Ernest Till, permanently resident in New Guinea, but for some months past, for health reasons, temporarily resident in Sydney, has been refused permission by the Public Trustee to operate on his banking account at Rabaul, on the ground that he was an enemy alien?

2. If this is so, in view of the fact that Dr. J. V. Danes, Consul for the Czecho-Slovak Republic, has certified that the said Ernest Till is

a subject of the Czecho-Slovak Republic, is it the intention of the Federal Government to permit him and others similarly situated to freely operate on their own accounts at Rabaul?

Mr. HUGHES.—Inquiries are being made, and the information will be furnished in due course.

NAURU PHOSPHATES.

FINANCING OF PURCHASE.

Mr. BRENNAN asked the Treasurer, upon notice—

1. By what procedure and under what authority did the Government obtain £1,470,000 or thereabouts from the war loan funds to finance the Nauru purchase of phosphates?

2. Did the Auditor-General countersign the instrument prescribed by section 32 (2) of the Audit Act 1901-1909 in respect of such payment?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. The amount of £1,470,000 was paid under the authority of the War Loan Act 1918, which appropriated £80,000,000 for "war purposes."

2. Yes. The warrant was signed for a lump sum of £10,000,000 for "war purposes."

BUDGET (1920-21).

In Committee of Supply:

Consideration resumed from 14th October (*vide* page 5687), on motion by Sir JOSEPH COOK—

That the first item in the Estimates, under Division I.—The Parliament—namely—The President, £1,100, be agreed to.

Upon which Mr. McWILLIAMS had moved—

That the item be reduced by £1.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY (Hume) [11.15].—When this debate was adjourned last evening, I was referring to the fact that when the Budget was first considered an honorable member on this side moved an amendment which, if carried, would have had the effect of reducing the proposed expenditure by £1,000,000. With the exception of that of the honorable member for Wimmera (Mr. Stewart), we did not get the support of any honorable member opposite for that amendment. The honorable member for Swan (Mr. Prowse) seemed to doubt that statement last night, but it is a fact.

Mr. PROWSE.—I was not here.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Honorable members on this side, in moving the amendment to which I refer, did not leave themselves open to the charge to which honorable members supporting the amendment now before the Committee are left open. Those who are supporting the amendment now under consideration have not indicated in what direction they desire expenditure to be cut down. When we submitted our amendment we pointed to the fact that the proposed expenditure on Defence was more than double what it was in pre-war days. Whilst I should, personally, be prepared to go much further, the consensus of opinion on this side was that the expenditure on Defence should be cut down to at least the pre-war expenditure, which would mean a saving of millions of money to this country.

Mr. FLEMING.—The honorable member proposed reduced Defence expenditure, in spite of the fact that honorable members opposite have complained that we are nearer to some possible enemies than ever we were before.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I have made no such complaint. I regard all this talk about defence, the arming of troops, and making provision for some war that is in the clouds, as so much flapdoodle. I see no immediate danger of war, and no honorable member on the Government side has indicated where any immediate danger lies. This talk is all for the purpose of giving some apparent justification to the country for this piling up of defence expenditure. The fact is that we are to-day spending in this country at the rate of war-time expenditure, and no country with a population of only 5,000,000 can expect to continue expenditure at that rate for very long. Any person who takes merely a casual look at the Budget, as introduced by the Treasurer (Sir Joseph Cook), will find that we are expending at nearly the same rate as when we were called upon to provide transport equipment and maintenance for 300,000 men overseas. In 1913-14, before the war, our annual expenditure was £25,000,000; in 1914-15, the first year of the war, it was £40,000,000; in 1916-17 it was £107,000,000; in 1917-18 it was £119,000,000; in 1918-19 it was £111,000,000; and in 1919-20, the first year after the war, it was £97,000,000. The Treasurer's estimate for the expenditure for this year is £98,860,000.

Mr. POYNTON.—How much of that is for repatriation, the resumption of land, and the building of homes for soldiers?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—And how much for war pensions and interest? This is another attack which the honorable member is making on the soldier.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I expected that from the Treasurer; but can afford to ignore such a false statement.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The honorable member is going to get it, too. He would not ask them to go to fight, and he will not look after them now they have returned.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—The Treasurer should not get wildly excited.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I am telling the honorable member a few truths, that is all.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—The Treasurer is not telling the truth, but that does not matter. I shall say what I desire to say despite the right honorable gentleman. I am well aware that in order to cover up the wrong in this Budget he will try to camouflage it by an appeal to the patriotism or the passions of the people.

Mr. FLEMING.—He is on the wrong track when he makes such an appeal to the honorable member.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I do not know that the honorable member for Robertson (Mr. Fleming) has a record in regard to the war that is very praiseworthy. I know that he parades what he did a great deal; but I am not concerned about that. I wish to keep personalities out of the debate, if the Treasurer will let me. The estimate of expenditure for this year is £98,000,000. The Treasurer and the Minister for Home and Territories remind me that a great deal of the expenditure is for repatriation, and other requirements of the returned soldier. I am not complaining about that.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The expenditure required for repatriation is £62,250,000, and the payments for other things arising out of the war bring the amount up to £73,000,000. If the £25,000,000 pre-war expenditure is added, we have £98,000,000, which accounts for the whole estimate for this year.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—The Treasurer says that I should cut out every expenditure for the returned soldiers. I shall do so, and refer only to the ordinary

expenditure. In 1913-14, the annual expenditure was £25,000,000, and cutting out all expenditure for the returned soldiers, the general expenditure proposed, after the war, amounts to £36,600,000.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—No, it does not.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—This represents an increase of £11,000,000 in ordinary expenditure beyond the pre-war expenditure. The Treasurer says that it does not, but he has only to look at his own Budget figures to find that it does. If the right honorable gentleman does not understand his own Budget, I cannot be held responsible for that. I have stated the facts, and I shall be very pleased if the Treasurer can point out where I am wrong. He will have an opportunity to explain the matter before a vote is taken on the amendment before the Committee, and if he can do so satisfactorily, he may influence some votes.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I think I shall be able to show that whatever increases in expenditure have occurred are largely attributable to Labour finance.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I have no doubt that the right honorable gentleman will try to put the blame on to Queensland or New South Wales, in which States there are Labour Governments, and that he will wriggle out of the difficulty in some way or other. The figures in his own Budget disclose the fact that ordinary expenditure has been increased by £11,000,000 without reference to any expenditure on the war, or on the requirements of the returned soldiers. The Budget discloses a state of affairs which, if continued, must lead the country to disaster.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I understand that the honorable member is good at mental arithmetic. How much per cent. is £11,000,000 on £98,000,000?

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I shall leave the Treasurer to answer that question. When the Treasurer visited Sydney after introducing his Budget, he made the statement, "I am very pleased with the kindly reception given to my Budget."

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Hear, hear!

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—If the right honorable gentleman has many friends around him like that, he should follow the advice of the great author, and fasten them to him "with hoops of steel,"

because friends who will follow the honorable gentleman on this Budget would follow him on the road that is paved with good intentions, of which we hear so much.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—

Ye think the rustic cackle of your bourg
The murmur of the world.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Friends who will applaud the right honorable gentleman for this Budget will stand by him for all time. I do not know how many such friends the honorable gentleman has, but the vote will show how many there are in this Committee. If a considerable number will follow the Treasurer on this Budget, he may be sure of holding his present position for the remaining two years of the term of this Parliament.

Mr. RYAN.—What about the High Commissionership?

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I am assuming that the right honorable gentleman is prepared to efface himself, will remain here, and will not accept the appointment referred to.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Here is another economist; and I have been dealing with applications of his for expenditure only this morning—legitimate applications, of course.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I should be better pleased if the right honorable gentleman would tell me how he has dealt with them. I shall not benefit very much from the Budget. There are some honorable members who will stand anything, so long as there is expenditure in their own electorates. I get no compensation of that kind at all.

Mr. HILL.—Can the honorable member tell us who does, outside members on the Government side?

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I shall be better able to answer the honorable member's question when the vote takes place. That should give some indication of those whose claims are receiving consideration. I am hoping that my electorate will not be neglected while this vast expenditure is heaping up.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes), in replying yesterday to the only honorable member whom he had heard taking part in this debate, said, amongst other things, that the primary producers had much for which to be thankful. I presume that his appeal was made to the Corner Party with the object of stiffening them up for

the coming vote and to leave them no loophole of escape. If the primary producers have anything to be thankful for at the hands of this Government, then their thankfulness must be much like that of the man who, after being knocked down by a motor car, brushes the dust off his clothes and thanks God that he was not killed. The primary producers have had the steam roller of the Government over them, but they have not been utterly destroyed.

Mr. GREGORY.—Are not the primary producers getting that sort of treatment from the New South Wales Labour Government?

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I only know that at a most representative meeting of farmers in regard to the non-payment of the guarantee of 5s. per bushel for wheat, as promised by the Prime Minister in his Bendigo speech, most complimentary references were made to the treatment which the primary producers had received at the hands of the New South Wales Labour Administration, which only took office a few months ago. The consensus of opinion in New South Wales is that the Labour Government is doing infinitely better than did its predecessors. The honorable member for Swan (Mr. Prowse) pointed out that during the four years of the war the area under cultivation was reduced to the extent of about 4,000,000 acres. That is an indication of how the primary producers were treated.

Mr. JACKSON.—Was it not lack of shipping that led to that decrease in the area under cultivation?

Mr. MACKAY.—Or lack of men?

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—No, it was lack of proper treatment at the hands of the Government. By way of illustration I need only point out that our primary producers during the war received for their wool and their wheat only about one-third of the amount that the primary producers of Canada, South Africa, and the Argentine received.

Mr. LAVELLE.—And the area under cultivation in New South Wales has increased since the Labour Government took office there.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—That is so. Now that the war is over this Government does not seem to be inclined to make amends for its shortcomings. The increased area under cultivation this year

is due to the fact that the farmers anticipated that the guarantee of 5s. per bushel for wheat delivered at railway sidings would be honoured, but, so far as we know, that pledge, which was given by the Prime Minister, is going to be repudiated. That is another answer to the right honorable gentleman's statement yesterday, that the primary producers have much for which to be thankful to the Government. The reverse is really the case.

As an illustration of the arguments that are used by Government supporters to justify their intention to vote against this amendment I would remind the Committee that the honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) said on Wednesday evening that he would not vote for the amendment, because if it were carried it would bring the Labour party into power, and that the country could not look to them for anything in the way of better financial control. That appears to me to be the very flimsiest of excuses, since the honorable member condemned the Budget to so great an extent.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Condemned it?

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—He pointed to expenditure which he considered to be unjustifiable. If honorable members on the Ministerial side are going to tolerate anything that the Government may do, and to explain their attitude by pleading that something worse might happen if Labour came into power, then one can only say that they are hard pressed for an excuse.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The honorable member for Flinders gave us what the honorable member could never pretend to give—a fair argument.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—The right honorable gentleman has said that he welcomes criticism.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I do, so long as it is fair and intelligent.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—But what, in the opinion of the right honorable gentleman, is fair criticism? He regards as unfair any criticism that is not to his liking. On what did the honorable member for Flinders base his conclusion? Was it upon any experience of a Commonwealth Labour Administration? When we last had a Labour Government in power in this Parliament the annual expenditure, apart from war

expenditure, was only £25,000,000. To-day it is £11,000,000 in excess of that amount.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Wrong again. I was in office in the year to which the honorable member refers.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I must ask you, Mr. Chairman, to protect me from the Treasurer, who tries to smother up every statement that I make which is not to his liking. I have referred to the assertion made by the honorable member for Flinders merely with a desire to secure information. On what did the honorable member for Flinders base his conclusion?

Mr. BRUCE.—If Labour to-day was what it was in 1913, I would not be so apprehensive.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—There has been no other form of Labour in power in this Parliament since 1913, consequently there has been nothing definite upon which the honorable member could base such a conclusion. We have had no Labour Government in power in this Parliament since the present Prime Minister went over to those to whom he was previously opposed. That being so, the honorable member is indulging in mere conjecture, and his statement is not quite in keeping with his usual fairness. But let us look further. Let us see what is happening where Labour is in power. In Queensland, for instance, Labour has been in power during the life of two Parliaments, and the people of that State, by an emphatic majority, have just returned the party to power once more.

Mr. MACKAY.—There was a majority of electors against the Labour Government at the recent Queensland elections. Labour secured a majority of the seats, but not the vote of a majority of the electors.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—The Queensland Labour Government has been returned by a majority of the votes. The position in Queensland to-day is that Labour, after being in power in two Parliaments, has been returned once more with a majority, notwithstanding that the whole of the press of the State was against it, and despite the enormous expenditure which its opponents incurred in endeavouring to bring about its defeat. It has been returned with a majority

which this Government would like to have at its back to-day. The counting of the votes has not yet been completed, but already it has a majority of eight. That is entirely satisfactory, and constitutes the best tribute that could be paid to Labour in politics. That being so, when the honorable member for Flinders says that he would not trust this party in office, I can only point out to him that, on all the facts available for his guidance, his decision should be reversed.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—May I remind the honorable member that I was Prime Minister in 1913-14—the year to which he was evidently referring when he spoke of Commonwealth expenditure, apart from war details, amounting to only £25,000,000.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—If we take the expenditure for the preceding year, when the right honorable member will admit the Labour party was in power, the expenditure was still less, so that I fail to see the point of the right honorable gentleman's interjection.

During the course of the debate a member of the Country party referred to the policy of the Labour party in regard to the primary producers, with the object of showing that it was detrimental to them. While he was speaking I interjected that he had omitted all reference to a portion of our policy which did not suit his argument. Our policy is that in regard to Australia's surplus products exported overseas we favour world parity, and our programme, on which the Labour Government in New South Wales was returned, is that in respect of produce for home consumption the price should be based upon the cost of production.

Mr. GREGORY.—In other words, the Labour party would fix the price.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Our policy is that for home consumption a reasonable price, based upon the cost of production, should be allowed, and that price should be a good one. That does not mean the fixation of prices. The honorable member for Swan would have us believe, however, that there is something detrimental in such a policy. I would remind him that it is entirely the same as that of his own party. Here are the words of the honorable member for

Wimmera (Mr. Stewart), a prominent member of the Country party—

Mr. GABB.—He is one of the "dinkum" members of the Country party.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—And a special friend of the Labour party!

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—He is a good straight man.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—But more of a Labour man than a Country party man.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—All the more to his credit. That is why he gets such substantial support from the farmers.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Anything anybody has to say against him should be said when he is present.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I have said it when he is present, and I shall do so again.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—At any rate, he is one of the straightest men in the House, and this is what he said, as reported in the Kerang newspaper—

The price of wheat for home consumption should be based on the cost of production, allowing for an eight hours day and a fair return on capital.

That is the policy of the Labour party, as far as the price of wheat is concerned.

Mr. PROWSE.—But until that policy is fixed—

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—The honorable member will try to cover up the statement of his colleague, but when honorable members on this side advocate the same policy in regard to the price of wheat he will tell the primary producer that there is something wrong with it. Let him start with one of the most honest men in his own party.

Mr. GREGORY.—Whether the statement was made by the honorable member for Wimmera (Mr. Stewart) or by anybody else the principle of it is wrong.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—The honorable member for Wimmera said that our policy is right, and when the Labour party in New South Wales went to the country on that policy it practically swept the polls, particularly in the country districts.

As I understand that it is the desire of the Committee to take a division early this afternoon, I shall content myself with referring to only two other matters. If ever a Royal Commission was required in regard to any matter it is required in regard to the contract entered into by the Commonwealth Government with the

Colonial Combing, Spinning and Weaving Company of Sydney. The matter has frequently been referred to by me and other honorable members, but we get no forrader, and I believe there are reasons for covering it up. The Prime Minister has been asked, for instance, as to when the litigation started by the ex-Treasurer (Mr. Watt) against the company will be proceeded with, and the Prime Minister's answer was that litigation was always very slow, and that some day this case would possibly reach the Law Courts. It is time that something definite was done in regard to this matter. This company, at the head of which is Mr. F. W. Hughes, has a capital of £135,000, and out of a contract made with the company by the Prime Minister has made a profit of £410,000. Nearly half-a-million pounds was made in profits, because of the preferential treatment meted out to that company as compared with the treatment accorded the Yarra Falls Spinning Company, and other companies engaged in the same industry. This Parliament should know why the Colonial Combing, Spinning and Weaving Company receives this special treatment. While the Prime Minister was absent in Europe the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Watt) instituted proceedings for the recovery of a large sum of money from the company, and after Mr. Watt resigned from the Cabinet it was an interesting fact, and not lacking in a certain amount of suspicion, that the Prime Minister spent a holiday on the station of F. W. Hughes, at Wagga.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—That was positively indecent, in view of the fact that this litigation was pending.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Those are the facts. A few weeks ago the Prime Minister was asked, for perhaps the twentieth time, when legal proceedings would develop, and he returned only an evasive reply. The case will be covered up if honorable members are content to allow things to remain as they are. I shall be ready to assist in probing the transaction to the bottom. At least a Royal Commission ought to be appointed to inquire into the relationship of the Government with the company that received such preferential treatment. The only explanation that has been given to us is that if the company had not received preferential treatment it would have closed down its works. That is no excuse, be-

cause the Government should have been prepared to carry on those operations. There is no justification for shelving this litigation.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Who says we are shelving it?

Mr. McGRATH.—Why did the Prime Minister go picnicking with F. W. Hughes?

Mr. LAVELLE.—He was learning to "shoot the profiteer."

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Tell us how the Prime Minister has shelved the litigation.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Two years is too long for litigation of this character to be hung up, and when so much suspicion surrounds the case, the proper course to follow is to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire as to why, amongst other things, the Colonial Combing, Spinning, and Weaving Company received better treatment than other spinning companies.

When so many millions of pounds are being voted for defence expenditure, we might very well find a few thousand pounds for expenditure in other ways to which no honorable member would take exception. I receive almost every day pathetic letters from old-age pensioners, who are hardly able to live on the pension of 15s. per week. Nobody in the House or in the country would object if that pension were increased to at least £1 per week. The worst feature of the pension is that the old people are not allowed to earn more than 6s. or 7s. per week.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—A pension of £1 per week would increase the bill by £3,000,000 per annum.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—We might make provision for that extra expenditure by deducting it from the defence vote.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I am sure the honorable member would do that.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I have heard no arguments advanced to convince me on the need of this defence expenditure, unless it be the Prime Minister's statement at Bendigo about some mysterious enemy that threatened Australia—the advance of Bolshevism, or some other "ism."

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Russia blew out Bolshevism when Poland beat her.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—The Prime Minister's other statement could

be blown out in the same way. Much more than this imaginary foe is required to convince me that we cannot save £3,000,000 on our defence expenditure and apply it to the relief of the old-age pensioners, who have done so much for the country. I frequently receive complaints that the pension has been cut down because some pensioner is earning more than 6s. or 7s. per week. Provision should be made to allow the pensioner to earn at least the equivalent of his pension before any reduction is made.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—That proposal, by increasing the number of persons who would be eligible for the pension, would cost the country an extra £750,000.

Mr. BELL.—What about taking the maternity allowance from those who do not need it and giving the money thus saved to the old-age pensioners?

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Any attempt of that kind would get us into a sea of trouble, and I would not support it. I do not propose to interfere with one of the best pieces of legislation ever introduced into the Commonwealth. Even if my suggestion in regard to the earnings of the pensioners would cost an extra £750,000, the expenditure would be quite justified.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—The present principle is quite wrong. If people sit down and loaf they may draw the full pension; if they are industrious and earn a little money the pension is reduced.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—That is the law passed by a Labour Government.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Put the blame on the Labour party.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—But the Labour party did pass the Old-age Pensions Act.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—We did; and if we were in power now we would amend the Act in accordance with the altered circumstances. The cost of living to-day is much greater than it was when that legislation was introduced. A pension of 10s. may have been reasonable when the Act was passed, but the equivalent of it to-day is £1 per week. I hope the Treasurer will think over this matter and at least allow the old people to earn 15s. per week before reducing the pension.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—If I find that there is plenty of revenue available I shall con-

sider whether I can cure these blunders made by the Labour Government.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—All I ask of the Treasurer is that he shall do what a Labour Government would do. As the Treasurer has invited criticism I hope I have done my share to please him.

Mr. RYAN (West Sydney) [12.0].—I have only a few words to say before the amendment is taken to the vote. It seems to me after perusing the Budget statement and the Estimates, that there is ample justification for the charge of extravagance laid against the Government by the honorable member for Franklin (Mr. McWilliams) and also ample justification for the motion he has moved to reduce the item by £1. As I understand it, the purpose of his amendment is to call attention to the general extravagance of the Government, which, however, he has not indicated with that particularity which I could have desired to see. He has referred to expenditure on the Northern Territory and on the Defence Department. I quite agree that the estimates of expenditure of Defence are far too high. I am not frightened by any suggestion that the Treasurer or honorable members behind him may make to the effect that the Labour party can be accused of not standing for the adequate defence of the country. No one can accuse the Labour party of that, but I think we may reasonably demand that the Government should give some earnest of their desire to reduce expenditure on Defence matters to something like a par with pre-war expenditure, making, of course, allowance for the increased cost of material and other increases of that kind. There is no doubt that the Government, in the past have been neglectful of what I may call Australia's interests. They have been prepared, and in fact their policy seems to have been, to subordinate Australia's interests to the interests of other places. We find, now, that the Treasurer, in his Budget speech, admits things which formerly the Labour party were dubbed disloyal for saying. On page 22, in justifying the expenditure for the war, the Treasurer said—

In considering the large expenditure which the people of Australia are being asked to bear as the result of the war, it should be borne in mind that Australia's burden is much heavier than that of some of the other Dominions, owing, principally, to the great difference in the distances over which troops had to be transported to the various battle fronts.

He also said—

Further, certain published figures show that the casualties among Australian soldiers as compared with enlistments were higher than among those of any other portion of the Empire. As a result, Australia has now to face an unduly heavy expenditure in order to meet her obligations to the dependants of men killed and incapacitated, and to returned soldiers to enable them to obtain a footing in civil life.

It is said that if you want to test where you are going, it is a good thing to look back where you come from. If we look where the Government came from, if we look back over their record, we will find the proof of the statement I have made, that the Government were prepared, throughout the war period, to subordinate Australia's interests to those of other portions of the Empire. Why should Australia, because she was further away from the actual seat of war, have a larger burden of debt to bear? Surely it is reasonable for us to expect that the Government would have taken some steps to have the expenditure pooled.

Mr. BELL.—I expect the other fellow had a say in that.

Mr. RYAN.—But no attempt was made to approach the Government of the Dominion of Canada, for example, to see whether they would not be prepared to pool expenditure.

Mr. POYNTON.—If we were to pool on the basis of the English expenditure, how would we come out?

Mr. RYAN.—I am speaking now of the expenditure of the oversea Dominions of the British Empire, and suggesting that it was fair and reasonable to expect the Government, that in fact, it was the duty of the Government, to see to it that we were not saddled with a larger proportion of debt than the other oversea Dominions. There is no denying the fact that Australia has had heaped upon the shoulders of her citizens an amount of something like £175,000,000 more than should be her fair share in proportion to what was borne by other oversea Dominions, more particularly Canada, on a population basis. I mentioned that fact before; but it is a fact that was suppressed from the people of Australia while the Government were endeavouring to get through two conscription proposals. They suppressed it then, but now they are willing to admit it.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Quite wrong. It was referred to on almost every platform, and heartily and utterly denounced as

being a craven proposal, and one which dishonoured the Australian soldier fighting at the Front.

Mr. RYAN.—I have heard that sort of "claptrap" from the right honorable gentleman during the last few years. That is the sort of stuff that the other side talked up and down Australia when they were advocating conscription. They said that Australia would be dishonoured, and that ours were craven proposals.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Then you do admit that it was referred to?

Mr. RYAN.—It is not a craven proposal to suggest that the Government should have done their duty by this country, and should not have allowed our interests to be subordinated to the interests of other places. Whose duty was it, if it was not the duty of the Government? It was no one else's duty. Not only did the Government neglect Australia's interests in that direction, but they also subordinated them in the matter of the sale of our primary products.

Mr. POYNTON.—We could have pulled out of the war, and saved quite a lot of money!

Mr. RYAN.—Probably the Government could have done so; but no one is suggesting it. I am suggesting that a Government in charge of the affairs of the country should not lose their heads. The present Government did not keep their heads, and, as a result, we have been saddled with a larger expenditure than we should have been saddled with. It is all very well to cry about "pulling out of the war." No one is suggesting that we should have pulled out, but what we do suggest is that the Government should have had regard to the interests of this country compared with the interests of other oversea Dominions.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I never heard your leader suggest that we should pool the expenditure.

Mr. RYAN.—I do not know what the right honorable member heard. It was impossible to know during the war what the Government were doing. No one except those in the Cabinet would be able to know what was going on; but now we are enabled to see that the Government did fail in their duty, as we suggested that they were doing while those two conscription campaigns were going on. They are now prepared to admit that our casualties were

higher than those of any other Dominion of the Empire. I think they were higher than those of any part of the whole Empire; but these are facts that were not admitted then. I refer to these things because we may judge of the future by our experience of the past. The Government proved that they had not that capacity, that cool-headedness, that shrewdness which they should have shown during the war period; and we may expect that they will continue so in the future. It is a matter of indifference to me what honorable members say by way of interjection or otherwise, because I know I am voicing the opinion of a very large majority of the people of this country. On the same lines, our primary products were disposed of under more disadvantageous conditions, and at lower prices, than those of other portions of the Empire. Our interests were subordinated there also, and if it had not been for the people of Australia and the Labour party we should have been much worse off than we are. No credit is due to the Government for the fact that we are not much worse off. They tried, by passing conscription, to bring about a state of affairs which would have placed us in a much worse position than we are in to-day to meet the great difficulties in front of us and to bear the great burden of debt which Australia has to shoulder. As I say, you must look where you come from to see where you are going, and we find the Government still carrying on the same policy. The Treasurer is mouthing about defence. He says to us, "You want to cut down our defence," but those suggestions do not go down. The people of Australia do not believe that the Labour party do not stand for the defence of this country.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The word "mouthing" is very vulgar. Cannot you find a better one?

Mr. RYAN.—It suits the right honorable gentleman. Not only were our interests subordinated, not only did the Government lose their heads, although, fortunately, they were frustrated in some of their proposals by the people of Australia, but the war expenditure was wrongly financed. I am glad to hear the admission made by some honorable members opposite that the method of financing the war expenditure by loan, bearing a good rate of interest and free of income tax,

was wrong. I was glad to hear the honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) admit that.

Mr. POYNTON.—That was introduced by the Fisher Government.

Mr. RYAN.—I do not care who introduced it. While the expenditure was small it was right enough, but when it mounted into hundreds of millions it was time the Government took some steps to see that posterity was not saddled with all the burden, and wealth relieved of its fair share during the time of the actual expenditure.

Mr. POYNTON.—That was done later on.

Mr. RYAN.—Not to the extent that it should have been. The Government would have been able to alter that policy to a far greater extent if they had seen to it that our primary products were properly disposed of at a fair rate, returning to the Australian producers the full amount received for them, and not allowing large profits to be made by profiteers overseas. And now we find that this huge burden of debt, which, of course, has to be met, is inflicting a very hard burden upon the people in the way of taxation. It is a problem that we have to face, but the burden is being placed too heavily upon the shoulders of those who are least able to pay the money. Why should not our income tax exemption be much higher than it is? Does any one suggest that there should not be a larger exemption, up to £300, or something in that vicinity? The Government are not prepared to do that. Their policy seems to be to broaden the basis of taxation—I think that is the way they describe it—which simply means placing the main portion upon the shoulders of the great mass of the people, whereas a proper and sound policy would be to increase the number of shoulders which are capable of bearing taxation. That could be done by encouraging the development of our natural resources, and by going in for a policy that would attract immigrants. We hear a good deal from the Government about their immigration policy. While on that subject, I should like to enter my protest against the appointment of a gentleman named Barnes to be sent home as Immigration Agent. His selection seems to be a reward for political services which were rendered to the Government during the recent Federal election campaign. I know

of no man's speeches that were further from the truth than those of Mr. Barnes. They were gross misrepresentations. They were wilful falsehoods.

Mr. TUDOR.—He must have a record then.

Mr. RYAN.—He must have. I know nothing worse than the statements that he made. They did not have even a scintilla of foundation in truth. Yet he has been sent Home to represent this country and carry on propaganda to attract immigration. What is there against an Australian going Home in order to encourage immigrants? It seems to me that Australians are not supposed to be good enough.

Mr. GABB.—We have no Australians at the head of the Government.

Mr. RYAN.—That is so. I do not object to that in itself, but, while every one should have equal opportunity here, we should have a Government in power actuated by Australian sentiment—a Government which will place Australia and her interests first.

Mr. McGRATH.—This Government profess to give preference to returned soldiers, but this man is not one.

Mr. RYAN.—I am reminded that this man was eligible and did not go to the Front. There must be numbers of returned soldiers capable of carrying out the duties; and to appoint one would be consistent, at all events, with the policy of the Government, or what they allege to be their policy. It is quite possible for the Australian Government, quite consistent with carrying out our duty as a partner in the great British Empire, to stand for Australian interests. If a member on this side of the House speaks of standing up for Australian interests, or against subordinating those interests, it is at once suggested that he is disloyal. I repudiate that suggestion; the truest loyalty, not only to Australia, but to the Empire, lies in the Government not subordinating our interests to those of any other portion of the Empire. That, as I say, is the duty of the Government, and it is quite consistent with performing in every detail our duty as a partner in the Empire.

I do not propose to speak much longer, because I know that an arrangement has been made to take a vote, and I do not

wish to monopolize the time which should be afforded to every member to speak if he so desires. I intend to support the amendment moved by the honorable member for Franklin.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—That is a surprise.

Mr. RYAN.—A surprise to you?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Yes; complete and overwhelming.

Mr. RYAN.—I can only say that the right honorable gentleman looks quite pleased. I intend to support the amendment, although I believe there is no "business" in it. I do not suggest that that remark applies to the honorable member for Franklin himself, but, as to his party, I think that the criticism is justifiable; it is certainly justified by the speech of the honorable member for Grampians (Mr. Jowett), who frankly admitted that he does not wish to put out this Government, and has no such intention.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—And you know, I suppose, that that is the only thing that the Leader of the Country party does desire?

Mr. RYAN.—I know that the honorable member for Grampians, and the Country party, as a whole, do not wish to put out this Government, but they are adopting a method of calling attention to the extravagance of the Government—extravagance, by the way, unchallenged, and unchallengeable—which certainly would outwardly appear to mean an intention to oust the Government. It is unfortunate for that party that it should contain such a prominent member as the representative of Grampians, who holds the high and honorable position of Deputy Leader, and that he should officially tell the Committee that there is no "business" in the motion. This is a lamentable state of affairs. I do not think time should be taken up with motions unless there is "business" in them—unless there is some "punch" in them. What is the use of "barking" without "biting?" I assure the Treasurer that I shall vote to put this Government out; I wish to remove the Government, because I believe their removal to be in the best interests of this country. I am satisfied there could be no worse Government in power, although there might be a better, even from our honorable friends in the Corner. In any

case, I wish the Treasurer to be under no misapprehension, if he should have any doubt as to my feeling towards the Government. I believe that the rule of the Government and their supporters is not in the best interest of Australia, and, consequently, that they ought to be removed from office, and I shall take every legitimate opportunity that presents itself to remove them. I do not care whether or not the consequences of this action may involve a general election.

Mr. TUDOR.—Or a double dissolution.

Mr. RYAN.—A double dissolution would be better still. It is a good thing to be always prepared to meet our masters, the people, who are, fortunately, above the Government and Parliament. I hope the time is not far distant when we shall have an opportunity of obtaining their decision on the matters now under discussion.

There are some items in the Budget to which I should have liked to refer, but they have been dealt with, more or less, already by honorable members on both sides, and, therefore, I shall pass them by.

One matter, however, is worthy of comment. I have heard no explanation, although I have frequently asked for information, as to the authority by which the money was paid in connexion with the purchases of Nauru and Ocean Islands. I believe that a reply to a question to-day suggested an authority, which, however, is really no authority for the payment. We have heard no explanation of how Ocean Island came to be included in the purchase. The Prime Minister has made a statement during the session that he intended to introduce a Bill to authorize the inclusion of Ocean Island in the Nauru Island agreement; and I should like an explanation from the Treasurer, who should know the facts of the case. Then, again, there should be an explanation in connexion with the action in the High Court against the Colonial Combining and Spinning Company, referred to by the honorable member for Hume (Mr. Parker Moloney), and also in regard to the action for defamation against the Prime Minister for statements made in London.

No doubt the Government are hanging on to office by devious methods, and they are suppressing much information that

should be given to the House and the country. We have seen some sudden conversions. The honorable member for Capricornia (Mr. Higgs), who was returned to oppose the Government by every means at his disposal, has suddenly turned, and become a staunch Nationalist. There are some actions that words fail to describe, and words fail to describe my view of this one; but it is regrettable that we should have the spectacle of the honorable member voting in order to keep in power a Government he was returned pledged to remove. It is a shocking state of affairs, which lowers our political morality in the estimation of the public. The Senate scandal has never been explained, and the other occurrences are apparently going on unnoticed. All this must lower the status of Parliament; and can we wonder at it?

I do not expect the amendment to be carried; so much can be gauged by the speeches made by our friends in the Corner. I hope, however, that its proposal will have the salutary effect of "pulling up" the Government—keeping them a little closer to the "straight" line—and that the references to their devious methods will, in the not distant future, lead to a restoration of our credit for political morality.

Sir JOSEPH COOK (Parramatta—Treasurer) [12.26].—I desire to make some reference to the attack on the honorable member for Capricornia (Mr. Higgs) which we have just heard. The honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Ryan) has attacked that honorable member for daring to vote with the Government on the present occasion.

Mr. TUDOR.—The honorable member for Capricornia was returned as an opponent of the Government—that is admitted.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I know some other gentlemen in the House, who were returned as Nationalists, but who are not Nationalists now; on the contrary, they have been trying their very best to dispossess the Nationalist Government.

Mr. HILL.—Name them.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The Leader of the Country party (Mr. McWilliams) is one of them.

Mr. HILL.—He can answer for himself.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I was about to say that no doubt each honorable member

will account to his constituents for the action he takes.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—May I say this to put you right? I was elected exactly in the same way as were nearly all the country representatives now sitting behind you. My candidature was indorsed by both the Nationalist party and the Country party.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—That is exactly what I say. The honorable member was selected and run as a Nationalist.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—That is quite incorrect. I was indorsed by both parties, and my biggest opposition came from the man who finances the Nationalist Association in Tasmania.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Let us get this matter clear. Will the honorable member say whether he was indorsed by the Country party before or after he had been selected as a Nationalist candidate? That is a straight question.

Mr. BELL.—I would like to put you all right—there is no Country party in Tasmania.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—There we are! I am uttering no complaint; I have no right to. I say, again, that every honorable member, no doubt, will answer to his constituents. When an honorable member makes an attack on another honorable member because he happens to have transferred to this side of the House—

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—May I say that during the election campaign, and particularly at Swansea, I said from the platform that if a Country party were formed when the House met I should be a member of it.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—That does not controvert what I have said.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Oh, yes, it does.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The honorable member was selected and ran as a National candidate. I am only mentioning this because of the complaint about another honorable member who has changed his place in this House. Moreover, I do not forget, either, that a great many members joined the Labour party after they had been unable to get political preferment as members of their own party.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—It is currently reported that you did the same.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I know.

Mr. RYAN.—It is very wrong of the right honorable the Treasurer to make any suggestion of that kind.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—But it is a fact, nevertheless.

Mr. RYAN.—There is no foundation whatever for the suggestion. It is merely a repetition of the falsehoods you have been telling!

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—But I am not referring to the honorable member for West Sydney, so he need not feel aggrieved about the matter.

Mr. TUDOR.—Well, name the members you refer to.

The CHAIRMAN (Hon. J. M. Chanter).—Order! It is time these personalities ceased.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I agree with you, Mr. Chairman; it is time.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—For many years I heard the same charge against you.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I know, but without a tittle of truth to support it.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—All these charges are like that.

Mr. LAVELLE.—But do you not think that the honorable course for the honorable member for Capricornia (Mr. Higgs) to take, after he had joined the Nationalist party, was to go back to his electors?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—My impression is that the honorable member for Capricornia has gone back to his constituents, and I think that honorable members will find him back in this House after the next election, too.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—The result of the Queensland election in his division does not suggest that he will be here.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I think the less honorable members opposite say about the Queensland elections the better. Only this morning, at this table, I was reading that one Nationalist member represented as many electors as six Labour members up there. So much for the democratic franchise, as shaped and conditioned by the Labour Government and Labour members of Queensland. They have so arranged the electorates up there, or have failed to arrange the electorates, that six Labour members represent the same number of electors as one Nationalist.

Mr. GABB.—Good old Nationalist!

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! I must again ask honorable members to cease interjecting.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Let us now get back to the Budget.

Mr. GABB.—Tell us something about the Senate.

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! The honorable member for Angas is again out of order.

Mr. GABB.—Well, I am speaking the truth.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I am only referring to these matters because I am obliged to do so. I have not introduced them to the debate, but I say that for whatever an honorable member does, so far as his party is concerned, his responsibility is to his constituents first and foremost, and in the final sum of things.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Hear, hear!

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—That is the doctrine I have laid down for myself for the last thirty years.

Mr. TUDOR.—And that is what I said last Friday, when the honorable member for Wide Bay (Mr. Corser) attacked the honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Ryan).

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Everybody is in agreement now, so it is all right.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—And now let us have a vote.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I should just like to refer to one remark made by the honorable member for Hume (Mr. Parker Moloney). I understand that he wants to take all the money from the Defence vote.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—I did not say "all."

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Well, nearly all, at all events.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—Three million pounds.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Yes. And he wants to put it to the credit of the old-age pensions scheme. Apparently, nothing is right about the Old-age Pensions Act now. Ever since honorable members opposite have been out of office the whole gravamen of their trouble is—"What foolish legislation we passed when we were in office!" These are some of the things we are hearing nowadays. Nothing is right about our legislation. The honorable member for West Sydney (Mr. Ryan) has condemned, root and branch, all that his party did while in office. And here, this morning, we are getting the same old complaint about the monstrously unfair and inequitable Old-age Pensions Act.

Mr. RYAN.—Speak the truth—if you can.

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! I must ask the honorable member for West Sydney to withdraw that statement.

Mr. RYAN.—I withdraw it, Mr. Chairman, but I do not want to be misrepresented.

Mr. LAVELLE.—You allowed the Treasurer to say, about fifteen times, that the honorable member for Hume (Mr. Parker Moloney) was not telling the truth, and did not say anything.

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! Will the honorable member withdraw that statement and apologize for insulting the Chair?

Mr. LAVELLE.—Yes, I will withdraw it, Mr. Chairman, because I want to give my vote on the division to put the Government out.

The CHAIRMAN.—The honorable member must withdraw it unconditionally.

Mr. LAVELLE.—I withdraw it unconditionally, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GABB.—The Treasurer is trying to get the honorable member for Calare out.

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! If the honorable member for Angas does not refrain from interjecting, I shall name him for disobedience to the Chair.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I should like now, as calmly as I can, to say a few words with regard to the complaints made by the honorable member for Hume as to the alleged unfairness of the Old-age Pensions Act, which he suggests is both inequitable and oppressive in its incidence on the old people.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—They are not the words I used, but they are something to the same effect.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Well, is not this complaint a condemnation of legislation passed by his party? They insisted upon placing it upon the statute-book in its present form.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—But the cost of living has almost doubled since then.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The cost of living has nothing to do with the matter at all.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Of course it has.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—And I say it has not. The cost of governing the country, as the honorable member showed a little later in his speech, is now about 25 per cent. more than it was in 1913-14, so far as ordinary services are concerned,

but the old-age pensions vote has been increased by 50 per cent.; so the Act cannot be quite so monstrous as the honorable member alleges. I suggest that when we have all this denunciation from the other side about legislation for which they were responsible, the only way in which we can safeguard the interests of the country is to keep such blunderers out of office.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—We intend to put you out, if we can.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I know; but I do not think you are going to do that. I have been asked by the honorable member for West Sydney if I can give some information about the Nauru and Ocean Island business. But he really knows all about it, although he keeps repeating the question. There has been authority to pay this money. He knows from what fund it is drawn. He knows that the warrant of the Auditor-General has been obtained for it, but still he keeps asking the same question, in the hope, no doubt, that he is going to get a point somewhere, some time, in connexion with it. The transaction is all as straightforward as it can be, so far as I know. We entered into an agreement with Great Britain and with New Zealand, and we were glad to do so. We believed we were getting an important concession for Australia when we undertook to purchase Nauru. Since then Ocean Island has been generously placed in the pool by the Imperial Government, and the two together make an excellent business proposition. It is expected that this purchase will prove one of the best investments we have made, when proper commercial management is applied to it.

Mr. RYAN.—I notice the directors did very well out of the business. I understand they got some thousands of pounds—£150,000, I think it was—out of it.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I do not know about that, but I dare say they did. What does the honorable member assume? I suppose the honorable member would have dispossessed them had he been in authority. What does he mean? Should the directors of the company not do well? Does it necessarily follow that because a man sells a property to a Government he must not do so well in a business sense as when he sells to a private individual?

Mr. RYAN.—After the purchase was completed, I understand, the company were able to give £150,000 in bonuses to their directors and others, so it looks as if it was a very good sale. Does it not?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—All I can say is that the sale was negotiated by the British Government.

Mr. LAVELLE.—Like the wheat purchase.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—If the honorable member for West Sydney wants to impugn the transaction, let him state his ground.

Mr. RYAN.—The Prime Minister suggests that the late Treasurer (Mr. Watt) brought about a worse deal through interference. What sort of a deal would the Prime Minister have made then but for that interference?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I know nothing about that matter at all.

Mr. RYAN.—It is all in *Hansard*.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—And in the cable news, too.

Mr. GABB.—It is a very awkward question.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—It is not an awkward question at all. The late Treasurer concluded this agreement when he was at Home. I have yet to learn that he did not do the best he could in the circumstances.

Mr. RYAN.—The Prime Minister suggests—

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Never mind what the Prime Minister suggests. The honorable member only says that. The honorable member for West Sydney is always prepared to get into a little trouble of this kind if he can turn it up. I am sure the late Treasurer did the best that was possible to be done in connexion with that agreement.

Mr. RYAN.—And the Prime Minister says he did not.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The honorable member is merely repeating his statement. I really heard him the first time he made it.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Never mind. The late Treasurer will deal with the Prime Minister on Wednesday.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—And then, I suppose, you will all be happy.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Provided he deals effectively with the Prime Minister.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—There are other matters upon which I should like now to make a few observations. We have heard denunciation times out of number about our attitude on the question of conscription, and I think the honorable member for West Sydney has urged that the expenses of the war ought to have been pooled as between the Dominions. What a fine idea this is of the principle of autonomous government of the Dominions! Has any other Dominion the right to stand up to the payment of our bills unless it also has the right to come in and control our affairs? Does not the honorable member see what ground he is getting on when he suggests that people in other parts of the British Dominions should help pay our debts? We did not ask for Canada's permission to send our soldiers abroad. We sent them of our own volition, and our soldiers, I am proud to think, were ready to go. It would have been a degrading thing to do, if, after our soldiers had left for the Front, we had gone cap in hand to the other Dominions and asked them to share our expenditure on our soldiers. It would have been dishonouring our soldiers if we had asked Canada, South Africa, and New Zealand, and the other Dominions of the British Empire to help us in that way. I would be no party to anything of the kind being done, because if we made any such proposition we would be degrading Australia and insulting our soldiers. Our obligations are our own, and this country is big enough, rich enough, and, I believe, loyal and faithful enough to the soldiers to stand up to all the obligations incurred on account of their going overseas to fight for its safety. In regard to conscription, I dare to say now, after the war, that through the want of conscription in Australia tens of thousands of our soldiers are lying dead on the fields of Flanders who would have had a chance of being at home to-day if every man here had been put under his proper citizen's responsibilities.

Mr. GABB.—It would have been the other way about; the more men you had, the more you would have used up.

Mr. McGRATH.—The soldiers voted against conscription, and they were the best judges.

Mr. BELL.—Perhaps the honorable member for Ballarat knows their reason for opposing conscription.

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! If honorable members will not voluntarily obey the order of the Chair, I shall have to insist upon them doing so.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—When I was in France when the big fight was proceeding, and when the Hindenburg line was smashed, two Australian divisions were out of the line, having been fought down to a strength of 7,000 men each, who would have been helping their mates in the battle if there had been men in Australia who realized their duty. They had to be pulled out, because they had fought themselves down to below the point of efficiency and strength.

Mr. McGRATH.—Did they not need a spell?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Of course; and their mates here should have been over there to spell them, instead of letting them fight themselves into such a condition.

Mr. McGRATH.—Yet they voted against conscription.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I repeat that thousands of our men would have been alive to-day if every citizen here had been placed under his proper soldierly responsibility.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Is there not a statement in the Budget that Australia played a part equal to the part played by any other country in the great war?

Mr. McGRATH.—It played a greater part.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Australia did its duty.

Mr. McGRATH.—Without conscription.

Mr. JACKSON.—Every individual did not do his duty.

Mr. McGRATH.—Let the honorable member speak for himself.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The honorable member for Ballarat did not encourage the individual to do his duty, did he?

Mr. McGRATH.—Yes, I did. But I did not advocate conscription.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Let me revert to the Budget. The statement has been made this morning that there has been an increase in the ordinary cost of administration during the war to the extent of £11,000,000, and it is correct, if everything is taken into the sum; but the honorable members who make the statement can

easily see in the Estimates the items which account for the increase. First of all, there is an increase of £68,000 in the cost of this Parliament, an increase on which honorable members have insisted. Then there is an increase of £145,000 in the Department of the Prime Minister. This Department has been attacked by the Leader of the Country party (Mr. McWilliams) and the secretary of that party (Dr. Earle Page). It is alleged that the increase in the cost of the administration of this Department is due to the fact that the Prime Minister has been taking hold of the functions of nearly every other Department and concentrating them in his own.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Hear, hear!

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—It is not correct. It is true that the Prime Minister has been dealing with sugar, but the commodity itself has paid the whole of the cost of controlling it. The country has been asked to pay nothing by way of taxation to meet it. The same remarks apply to the control exercised in regard to wheat, wool, and metals, and in respect of every other big enterprise or activity controlled by the Department of the Prime Minister. Each enterprise has been made to pay for itself, and the cost of its control has not contributed towards the increase in the cost of administering the Department.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Does not the work entailed in the control of these commodities increase the cost of the Department?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The cost of controlling them has been paid for out of the commodity.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Not in some cases.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—In nearly every case. I propose to tell the honorable member what has occasioned the increase in the cost of the administration of the Department of the Prime Minister. In the first place there appears in the Estimates this year an item of £10,000 for the cost of the inquiry into the Basic Wage. Another item is £37,700 for the cost of the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. Another new item is the amount of £4,000 for the relief of strikers during the maritime strike. Still another new item is a sum of £15,000 for the League of Nations. There is an increase of 100 per cent. in the cost of running the office of the

Public Service Commissioner, the item having been increased this year from £10,000 to over £20,000. Furthermore, the subsidy for the Pacific mail service has been increased by £18,400.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—That item ought not to be found in the estimates of the Department of the Prime Minister.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I have yet to learn where else a subsidy for a mail service for territories quite outside Australia can be placed, except in the estimates of the Department which controls foreign affairs. There is increased expenditure amounting to £15,000 in connexion with the Audit Office. The cost of auditing accounts has nearly doubled during the war, and no one insists upon the auditing of accounts more than does the honorable member for Franklin. I am sure that he would not believe that Mr. Israel, the Auditor-General, would ask for this huge sum unless he considered it necessary.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—But that is not expenditure in the Department of the Prime Minister. Such expenditure ought to be under the Treasurer.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—But even if it did appear in the estimates of the Treasurer's Department, this additional expenditure would not be avoided, but, as a matter of fact, the Auditor-General stands outside all Departments and keeps in formal touch and communication with them through the Department of the Prime Minister. The honorable member may argue that this or that function should not be entrusted to the control of the Prime Minister, but even if it were removed to the control of another Minister the cost of administering it would still be the same.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—That is doubtful, because you are creating new offices, whereas officials in other Departments could do the work.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—As for instance?

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Shipbuilding.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Does not the honorable member know that shipbuilding is controlled by the Minister for Home and Territories (Mr. Poynton)?

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Then, who made the contracts for shipbuilding in America?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—All the time the honorable member is off on to something else, but he may not hop on to that

twig when I am dealing with the cost of the Department of the Prime Minister.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—The right honorable gentleman states that shipbuilding is not controlled by the Prime Minister, but I ask who made the contracts?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The honorable member certainly referred to shipbuilding, and I replied that it was a matter which was not controlled by the Department of the Prime Minister, and, as a matter of fact, has not been for this year at least. We are now considering this year's Estimates, and I am endeavouring to point out "all these huge increases" to which the honorable member has made reference. There is an increase of £6,843 for rent, and £14,000 for interest on Treasury bills. Altogether these items amount to £130,000, which is more than the total increase in the cost of administering the Department as compared with four years ago. But what item is there which the honorable member would knock off? Would he cut out the expenditure entailed in welcoming His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, or delete the item provided for giving relief to strikers during the maritime strike?

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I say "no," but I contend that owing to mismanagement the latter item of expenditure is much more than it ought to be.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Would the honorable member delete the item of £15,000 for the League of Nations?

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—No.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Would he interfere with the control and cost of the office of the Public Service Commissioner? Would he knock out the subsidy for the Pacific mail service instituted for the benefit of our traders in the islands? Or would the honorable member interfere with the increase of £15,000 in the expenditure on the Audit Office?

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—No, but I would interfere very materially with the Pacific mail contract.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Very well, we can discuss that item when we reach it, and if the honorable member has any light to throw upon it it will be very welcome.

Mr. GABB.—Why discuss these items now?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I am replying to an attack made by the Leader of the Country party. He launched an attack upon the Department of the Prime Minister for having increased its expenditure excessively. Is it unfair that I should make a reply?

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I think the reply is fair. I am not objecting.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—It is my place and my duty to give the Committee all the information it requires. The more information honorable members can get the better it will be for the control of the finances, and the less we shall hear of this controversy which is proceeding outside, and finds an echo in this chamber, and the claim that there has been roaring extravagance in all Departments. Another Department which has been singled out as showing excessive costs is that of Home and Territories, in which there are two items which make up the increase this year. There is an item of £8,538, representing the increase in the cost of the Meteorologist's Department; but there is a further and new item of £52,000 for the meteorological telegrams which are posted up and down the country. But this is merely a book entry. Formerly, the Post and Telegraph Department did this work for nothing, but it has always claimed that it should be paid for it, and, in accordance with a promise made by my predecessor (Mr. Watt) last year, that in all fairness the work of transmitting these telegrams should be credited to the Post Office, provision is made on these Estimates to do so, at the same time debiting the cost to the Department of Home and Territories.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.15 p.m.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—When the House adjourned, I had already shown how the expenditure in the Prime Minister's Department had increased during the war period. I was proceeding to deal with some of the items in the Department of Home and Territories, and had already mentioned one item of £52,000 for meteorological telegrams, which is not an increase at all, as it is a mere bookkeeping entry. There is an increase of £58,000 on account of immigration, and an expenditure of £6,500 to be incurred in making arrangements for dealing with

the hookworm disease. We have also to take the census, which will cost £150,000. Passports under the Alien Restriction Act account for £5,000, and rent, furniture, &c., amount to £14,000, while interest on transferred property and other interest amounts to £22,000. In these items alone there is an increase in the Home and Territories Department of over £300,000, and I challenge honorable members to point to any one of those items which they can touch. It is time this general denunciation ceased, unless honorable members are prepared to come down to "tin tacks." I want to be shown where this money can be saved, and I do not want criticisms in the form of general statements, but on these Estimates. Honorable members have had an explanation, and I am quite prepared to leave it to their good judgment. Take the Department of Works and Railways. Expenditure there has increased during the war period, but why? There is one item alone of £280,000 a year on account of the Kalgoorlie-Port Augusta Railway, which has only recently been completed. Interest, again, on that railway accounts for swelling the expenditure of the departmental estimates to the tune of £218,000 per annum. If we add to that the Railway Commissioner's salary, £2,000, there is roughly an increase of £500,000 in that Department alone. Can honorable members touch that? Are they going to repudiate their debts in order to make out a balance sheet? That is what it comes to. A statement was made this morning that the increase on the general administration, as compared with 1913-14, shows an excess of £11,000,000. Let us see how it is made up. I have already referred to £68,000 extra for Parliament. I cannot touch that.

Mr. BAMFORD.—Justifiable expenditure.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—In the Prime Minister's Department there is an increase of £145,000, which I have already explained, and in the Department of the Treasury an increase of £500,000 as compared with pre-war days. That is attributable solely to the increased cost of collecting taxation we have imposed. Where we once collected £2,000,000 a year we are now raising £20,000,000; and, as I have already informed the Committee, the cost of collecting our taxation is £1 18s. 9d. per cent. The cost of collecting Customs dues amounting to

£26,000,000, will, this year, be £1 15s. 6d. These are tests that must be applied when discussing economy.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—There is not any more expense incurred in collecting additional Customs dues.

Mr. GREGORY.—There is less stuff coming in.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—There is not.

Mr. GREGORY.—I will prove that there is.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—There are the same number of taxpayers, at any rate.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The Customs Department is collecting at the rate of £1 15s. 6d. per cent., and that is the test that must be applied when honorable members are charging the Government with extravagance. The increase in old-age pensions during the war period amounted to £2,635,000. Can we pare that down? Almost every honorable member is asking for an addition to that sum, and this afternoon I am to meet a deputation that is to make a similar request. Then there is the Department of Defence and the Department of the Navy which show an increase of £1,451,000. I shall say nothing about that, and honorable members must make up their minds where to attack that item. There is a new item in connexion with Air Services of £205,000, also out of revenue. Trade and Customs shows an increase of £298,000 over the last five years, and there has been an increase during that time, I believe, of more than 100 per cent.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Increased Customs dues do not increase the labour of the staff.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Ask the honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) whether it costs more or less to handle a large turnover. There is also the question of the sugar bounty. This is one of the items that the Prime Minister insists on coming into his Department, and which swells the total of his Estimates. There is nothing here on that account, although there was £145,000 in 1913. All the sugar that is being handled cost the taxpayers of this country not one penny piece. I have already referred to our commitments in connexion with the Kalgoorlie-Port Augusta railway.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Everything in the garden is just lovely!

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I have given honorable members the items, and have

shown that there is an amount of £280,000 to meet the deficit, plus about £220,000 for interest, making £500,000 for the transcontinental railway alone. That is not a rose-coloured statement to make the garden look lovely, but hard cold facts. The Postmaster-General's Department shows an increase during the war period of £1,685,000. Does the Leader of the Country party (Mr. McWilliams) propose to touch that?

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—That is the best increase of the lot.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—And so say all of us. There is an increase during the same period of £582,000 for payments to the States under the Surplus Revenue Act.* Will the honorable member for Franklin touch that? There is also an item of £911,000 for interest which appears on both sides of the ledger which is not an increase, although it appears as such. There is an increase in works and buildings of £2,348,000, and I do not think any one is prepared to advocate a reduction there. I do not mind considering this matter very closely with those who do, and if a reduction is favoured I will cut a number of the items out. If they want economy in new works and buildings, I am prepared to consider it with them, and see if a reduction cannot be made. There is also the Oodnadatta railway loan, which covers an amount of £88,000. Those are the items, and I shall give further details later.

I regret I have not sufficient time to refer to one or two matters that were mentioned in the excellent speech of the honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) the other night. I welcome contributions such as his in discussing this question, and I venture to say that he lifted the debate to its proper plane. There are only one or two other items to which I shall allude at the moment. First, there is the Nauru Island expenditure of £1,500,000. I have not been able to check the statement made by the honorable member for Flinders that this came out of loan money in Great Britain, but I believe that no item could be more properly debited to our Loan Estimates. It is a reproductive and practically permanent asset. It is a diminishing asset, it is true, but of such slow extinction that it may be called permanent. The same may be said of Australia House in London, which, I believe, will last for at least 250

years. It is situated on one of the finest sites in London, it is a solid asset, and one, I am sure, which can be regarded as reproductive.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—It should be, but I do not think the Treasurer can say it is.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I do say it. Even if it did not do more than merely stand there, it is worth the expenditure as an advertisement to Australia.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—It is a bad advertisement.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The honorable member has not seen it.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—I have heard very serious statements made by those who have seen it.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—They are complaining of other things. It is worth the expenditure, even if its activities were reduced. It is an asset which is coveted by other Dominions. There is another item of £2,400,000 on account of soldiers' transportation expenses, and it has been said that I have shown a lack of courage in not taking the whole of that sum out of revenue. It has been pointed out, quite correctly, that it is divided roughly in halves, one half coming out of revenue, and the other out of loan. The explanation is simple. It is a loan item proper. I have fixed my loan commitments for the year to which I shall rigidly adhere. I want honorable members to recollect that one of the governing features of the Budget is that there are to be no further loans this year on account of war obligations.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—Or in regard to anything else?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Yes; there is the matter of the war gratuities to be dealt with next year; but, so far as war loan obligations are concerned, there will be no further loans this financial year. That is one of the fundamental features of the Budget; and, after accounting for that, I had to take over into revenue all these other loan obligations. I very much regret that I could only get half the amount to which I have referred into my Budget. If I had put the other half in, it would have involved some further taxation; but, on the whole, I have made a very good beginning, I think.

Generally, so far as the debate has gone, I make no complaint. I regret the taking of this vote in this particular way. I do not think the amendment ought to

have been moved. It can lead to nothing. It cannot help one straw in the elucidation of the problems which confront us. I shall welcome the fullest investigation into the Estimates. I invite honorable members to concentrate their attention upon any item which may strike them, when I promise, further, that the most complete information shall be afforded.

Mr. FOWLER (Perth) [2.32].—I was surprised to learn this afternoon that an arrangement had been made to take at half-past 2 o'clock a division upon the amendment of the honorable member for Franklin (Mr. McWilliams). I had no knowledge of any such arrangement. I have been busily engaged all the week on public duties outside of this Chamber, and the present moment presented itself as my sole opportunity of contributing to the debate upon the Budget. I made a special effort to be here to proffer some remarks. It is hardly fair for honorable members, even though they be leaders of parties, to barter our privileges in this fashion.

Consideration of the country's finances is a very important feature of our duties. I do not know that my contribution to the gross wisdom of Parliament can amount to much; still, I would fall short of my duty if I failed to take the opportunity to say something upon the present situation. There have been several occasions when I would have liked to speak upon matters, particularly of national and international purport, when, however, I, with other honorable members, have been denied the opportunity. Looking all round, not only upon the Commonwealth, but on the world at large, one must realize that there is sufficient in the political and financial outlook to warrant more consideration of Australia's prospects than has been given by this Parliament up to the present.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—This afternoon's arrangements were made chiefly to suit the convenience of honorable members who are going away, and more particularly that of members of the Finance Committee, who will be leaving for Brisbane.

Mr. FOWLER.—I do not see how members of the Public Accounts Committee are being suited by closing the

debate at half-past 2. Their interests would have been better served by continuing until the usual time of rising to-day, seeing that they are about to leave for Brisbane on public business, and, probably, they will not have returned in time to participate in any further discussion of the Budget, or upon the Estimates specifically.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I think, in the circumstances, then, that this debate might proceed for an hour.

Mr. FOWLER.—I understand that there are other members of the Finance Committee who wish to speak, and there may be still other honorable members generally. If, however, no one beside myself desires to contribute to the debate, I shall sit down.

Mr. LAVELLE.—I wish to speak, and if the honorable member resumes his seat, I will address the Committee.

Mr. FOWLER.—That being so, I shall not forgo my right upon this occasion.

I do not want the Treasurer (Sir Joseph Cook) to think that I am speaking generally against the proposals which he has submitted. So far as his taxation proposals are concerned, they shall have my support. It is only in consideration of the expenditure of the country's money that I have some hesitation in supporting the Government. The Treasurer has been very fortunate on account of the abnormal inflation of revenue at present; but that consideration should only have justified more caution than ever, because a considerable amount of that revenue will speedily disappear as the countries of the world revert to normal conditions. I regret particularly that the comparatively small surplus—but still an encouraging one—is being mopped up under the present proposals. An effort should have been made to carry that surplus forward, as a kind of nest-egg, towards meeting the very large obligations with which we shall be faced in the near future.

I cannot support the amendment for the reason, in particular, that the honorable member for Franklin has not shown sufficient cause for the reduction which he suggests. It is impossible for me, and I think for many other honorable members, to vote for the reduction on the strength of the case submitted by the Leader of the Country party. More drastic proposals would be necessary before this House could be expected to

concur in the amendment. I desire to suggest where these more drastic reductions can be and ought to be made. In the first place, there are so many leakages from the Treasury chest that it is almost impossible, in the course of a speech, such as I propose to make, in brief, to specify all. But I want to remind the Committee and the country that, when this Government took office, I pointed out what would undoubtedly follow with a gentleman like the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) in charge of our affairs. There would be all sorts of schemes launched, some of them sensible, and some very unwise; but I held that there would be nothing done in the direction of economy so long as the Right Honorable W. M. Hughes remained at the head of any Government in Australia. When the present Government took office I pressed the view that they were animated by but one object in common, and that that was "office," and that they did not by any means represent the highest ability of this House in all respects.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—But the honorable member has voted for the Government every time.

Mr. FOWLER.—I have not. When I pointed out that fact, and indicated the inevitable result; I was met by serious accusations from many quarters concerning the disinterestedness of my motives. However, we are faced to-day with a situation so grave as to have justified all the apprehensions I have ever expressed concerning the Government.

When we find that money is still being spent, despite the grave financial outlook, upon all sorts of schemes, no matter how far-fetched, this Committee is in duty bound to give the Budget proposals the closest possible supervision. For example, we have been paying for several years for a scheme of rain-making—an experiment of a most ridiculous character, expenditure upon which has only now been cut down after repeated protests. Then we find, also, that quite recently a sum amounting to nearly three-quarters of a million has been thrown away upon a Naval Base constructed in a place possessing no recommendations whatever for such an establishment. I was among those who pointed out, from the inception of the work at Flinders, how unsuitable was

that spot for the purpose of a Naval Base. A large barracks was built at the head of a shallow gutter running up from the harbour, and that was to be the submarine head-quarters. The gutter required dredging from the entrance to its head. It was only a few inches deep, in some places, at high tide; while, when the tide was out, there were many acres which had no water over them at all. Again, it was easily assailable from the ocean. A war-ship could stand out a safe distance, and, with a few shells, knock the whole place into "smithe-reens." Upon examining the reports of those experts who came out from England to advise us regarding the fortification of this country, one is amazed that the Government should have had the temerity to spend money upon the Flinders Base, because that site was suggested, at best, as suitable for only a temporary and secondary base. Instead, however, the bulk of the money devoted to Naval Base schemes has been spent on that impossible site. Upon the other hand important Naval Bases, indicated as such by the most expert opinion we have had available—Bases like Cockburn Sound—have been turned down by the Government. I do not suppose that the Minister for the Navy (Mr. Laird Smith) is really responsible for this decision, but I would like to know who were the experts who recommended the Naval Base at Flinders. I have made many inquiries, but have not been able to get the desired information. These experts ought to be discovered, and if they are still in the Service they should be kicked out.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I wish the honorable member would help me to discover them. I cannot find out who they are.

Mr. FOWLER.—The whole thing is wrapt in mistry.

It is the duty of Ministers to find out who are responsible for these mistakes. I hope that work will be continued on the important Naval Base on the coast of Western Australia, which must undoubtedly be the principal Base in the Commonwealth, because it is the front door to Europe. The Naval Bases upon the west and east coast of Australia are, to my mind, the necessary ones. Those upon the southern coast, whilst necessary in a subsidiary sense, from the point of

view of priority, and of the amount of money expended upon them, should be relegated to the position which they were intended to occupy by our best naval experts.

I wish now to give the Government an indication of where I consider that a drastic reduction in the Estimates may be made. It is in connexion with our Defence scheme. I know that some honorable members will be horrified at my suggestion. But nobody can accuse me of being anything in the nature of a pessimist. As a rule, the accusation levelled against me is one of a totally different character. I am usually regarded very much as a Jingo. I claim, at any rate, that I have always stood up for the integrity of Australia and of the Empire. I will see nothing done, if I can help it, which will imperil our interests or the larger interests of the Empire. But, having given the best attention of which I am capable to the national relations of the Empire and Australia, I say, unhesitatingly, that I can see nothing, either on the immediate or distant horizon, which will justify the forces that the Government propose to establish. Eight years before the great war, I pointed out that such a struggle was coming. More than once I warned the Government of its approaching imminence. But to-day I see nothing to justify a heavy expenditure upon Defence. It was Admiral Hender-son who gave us some years before the war a very large and expensive scheme of naval defence. Upon his recent visit to Australia, however, he said nothing whatever about that scheme. Upon the contrary, he told us that our lines of safety lay in three directions, namely, by increasing our population by every means in our power, and particularly by means of immigration, by developing our mercantile marine, and by fostering our rural resources by the construction of railways to convenient ports. No war scheme was even suggested by him. He realized, as anybody must do who considers the situation carefully, that the future of this country depends upon the fulfilment of the conditions which I have enumerated. The first and most vital of all of them is the development of our population. Give us more population, and we shall be safe. But if we do not carry out an effective scheme of immigration, unquestionably

the outlook for the future will be black. In the year immediately preceding the war Canada obtained 400,000 immigrants from Great Britain, whereas we have been getting them in dribbles of a few dozen at a time. I understand that the Government have a comprehensive scheme of immigration in hand, and I ask them to push on with it as speedily as possible in order that immigrants may be settled upon the vacant spaces of this continent, which are crying out for development. I do not suggest that they should be brought to our cities to glut an already overcrowded labour market. But in our vacant spaces there is ample room for all of them. In this connexion we should not pay too much attention to State boundaries. I know the request will be made that whatever money is expended upon an immigration scheme should be expended equally in all the States. That suggestion ought not to be entertained for a moment. The money should be spent in those States which will give the best results to Australia. Now the States which can offer the best opportunities in regard to land settlement are undoubtedly Queensland and Western Australia. It is in those States that settlement may be promoted to the best advantage. I trust, therefore, that the old idea of spending so much money in each State upon any given scheme will be abandoned.

To my mind the principal Defence policy of Australia is the creation of a bigger population. But where is the enemy whom we are preparing to withstand? There is no possible enemy in Europe. To-day Europe lies practically prostrate under an overwhelming load of debt incurred in connexion with the last war. There is no country in the civilized world which will care to take up arms again except for purely defensive reasons as long as the present generation exists to vividly recall the horrors of that war. It has been intimated that Japan may be regarded as a possible enemy. I do not think we have any need to apprehend trouble from a Japan which is treated with the respect that is due to an ally. But the continuance of the present Leader of the National party (Mr. Hughes) as the Leader of the Commonwealth is certainly calculated to offend Japan, because of the attitude which he adopted

towards that country at the Peace Conference. I am amazed to find that, despite all the efforts which have been made to disabuse the public mind in that regard, the Prime Minister is still hailed as the saviour of the White Australia policy in opposition to Japan. The White Australia policy has never been challenged by Japan, and was never in danger until the Right Honorable William Morris Hughes endangered it by his attitude at the Peace Conference. There, he refused to entertain a perfectly reasonable proposal on the part of Japan—not a proposal to send immigrants into Australia, not a demand for impossible concessions, but merely a proposal that she should be relieved of the obloquy of being regarded as an inferior race. The members of the Peace Conference were assured again and again that Japan did not intend to interfere with the rights of self-government of any other nation. There is no suggestion in the proposal put forward by Japan that she wishes free entrance into any country. I may be asked to remember what has happened in America; but the position there is one which, to my mind, does concern Japan, and in which she has proceeded no farther than would any other civilized community. America has for years allowed Japanese immigration, especially into the western States. For a long time, the people of California entertained no objection to Japanese entering their territory. So long as they went there as "hewers of wood and drawers of water," everything was all right; but when they began to become capitalists, the trouble commenced in earnest. Under these circumstances, Japan has a perfect right to protect the interests of her people, who were allowed to enter America without any stipulation whatever, or any limitation of their freedom of action. We should be very careful, therefore, concerning the position of Japan in the world to-day. I am sure that Japan has no quarrel with Australia, that she does not wish to overwhelm us with her immigrants, and that she merely desires to be placed upon terms of equality in her relations with her Allies. Therefore, the only possible enemy of Australia is our friend, so long as we do not go out of our

way to unnecessarily insult her. For that reason I see no justification at the present time for a huge expenditure upon defence.

If I am afforded an opportunity of doing so, I shall move for a very considerable reduction in the Defence Estimates, largely because our Defence policy is totally unjustified at the present time, and because it is absolutely necessary that this large spending Department should be under the control of a Minister in this Chamber. It is an anomaly that the Department should be controlled in another place. In view of the notorious failure of the Minister for Defence (Senator Pearce), who has been in charge of it so long, and of his utter inability to resist the demands which are made upon him by his officers, the time has long since arrived when the control of the Department should be directly in this House; and if I get an opportunity I shall undoubtedly move in that direction.

Mr. LAVELLE (Calare) [2.59].—It is not my intention to detain the Committee very long, but I desire to make it clear that I propose to vote against the Government. I shall support the amendment, because I recognise in it something quite different from what is discerned in it by the honorable member for Bass (Mr. Jackson), who stated last evening that he could not see in it any motion of censure upon the Government. Whilst I confess that to move a reduction of £1 in the Estimates as an instruction to the Government that they must reduce the proposed expenditure by £1,000,000 is rather a peculiar procedure, I want this significant fact to be made perfectly plain to the people outside. Honorable members upon this side of the chamber are very desirous of seeing the amendment carried, because it will mean the defeat of the Government and the advent of a new Government upon the Treasury bench.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—We can fall in with the idea of the honorable member for Perth (Mr. Fowler) that we should get a new Prime Minister.

Mr. LAVELLE.—I agree with the honorable member for Perth as to the need which exists for securing the services of a new Prime Minister. I have always voted against the Prime

Minister (Mr. Hughes) and his Government. Unlike the honorable member for Perth, I have never created the impression that I intended to vote the right honorable gentleman out of office and then voted to keep him in office.

Mr. FOWLER.—I have not done that.

Mr. LAVELLE.—I have heard the honorable member attack the Government, and then record a vote to keep them in office. The Treasurer (Sir Joseph Cook) endeavoured to make capital of the fact that, although members on this side are finding fault with the Old-age Pensions Act, it was the Labour party that placed that Act on the statute-book, and that it is, therefore, responsible for it. It is true that that humane piece of legislation adorns the statute-book because the Labour party put it there; but, since it was passed, certain defects have been discovered in it which should be remedied, and when we have an opportunity to amend the Act we shall make it far more beneficial to the pensioners whom it now assists, and bring many others within its scope. The Treasurer fails to take into consideration the fact that when the Act was passed 10s. would purchase more than £1 buys now. In his usual fashion, he has endeavoured to cloud the issue, and to place the blame on some one else. He would have it believed that he and his Government are the only people who would do anything for Australia.

In looking through the Estimates, I see that the sum of £792,412 has been expended in London during the past few years for the purchase of land and the erection of buildings for the High Commissioner's Office.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—More than that.

Mr. LAVELLE.—That makes the case all the worse. This year it is proposed to spend on the maintenance of the office £8,807 in salaries, £45,097 on contingencies, and £70 on miscellaneous expenses—a total of £53,974. Further, in the Loan Estimates £64,000 is put down for London offices, making the total expenditure in London this year £117,974. The people of Australia would like to know what they get for that huge expenditure. The visit of Commonwealth Ministers—I presume that of the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) and the Treasurer (Sir Joseph Cook)—cost us £11,841, and the visit of a Minister (Senator Pearce) to arrange for the demobilisation of the Australian Imperial Force cost £1,550. If the High

Commissioner is capable of doing his work, it should not be necessary to send Ministers to England on holiday jaunts.

Mr. POYNTON.—Wait until you can take a holiday jaunt like that.

Mr. LAVELLE.—I do not want a holiday trip at the expense of the people, and I shall never, in order to retain office, go back on the party which put me into the House. Time and again it was asked in this Chamber whether Senator Pearce was to visit England, and it was denied that he was going, until eventually berths were booked for him, his wife, and children, and a large staff. We had at the time in England, attending to the demobilization of the Australian Imperial Force, Lieutenant-General Sir John Monash, a man much better fitted for the work than any Minister could be. Then this year Mr. Watt, the ex-Treasurer, went to London. We were told that £8,000,000 had to be paid by this Government to the Imperial Government, and that unless Mr. Watt went post-haste to London to pay it, Australia would be posted as a defaulter before the eyes of the world. Mr. Watt was sent on an allegedly important mission, although there was the High Commissioner in London to do anything that needed to be done. If the work of the High Commissioner's Office is not going to be done better in the future than it has been done in the past, we might as well close that office. Although there are seven State Agents-General and the Commonwealth High Commissioner, Ministers are sent Home on a holiday jaunt whenever there is any work of importance to be done. Senator E. J. Millen is now on his way to the Geneva Conference, which, according to the press, is not to be held.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—You have not understood the press statement.

Mr. LAVELLE.—To-day's *Age* says—

THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

WILL NOT BE HELD.

Statement by Belgian Premier.

Paris, 13th October.

The Belgian Premier, M. Delacroix, stated in an interview to-day that he believed he had succeeded in his negotiations with Mr. Lloyd George concerning Germany's reparations. The Geneva Conference would not be held.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—That refers only to the discussion of reparations.

Mr. LAVELLE.—I will suppose that for once in his life the Treasurer has made a correct statement, and that the Geneva

Conference will be held. That does not get away from the fact that if the High Commissioner is capable of representing Australia he should represent it at that Conference, and if he is not, he has no right to be drawing his salary, and the people of this country should not be saddled with the continuance of his office.

There are one or two items of past expenditure to which I intend to refer. One is a payment of £10,000 in connexion with the Basic Wage Commission. The Treasurer, in an apparently convincing manner, in referring to this item, asked "Does any one oppose that?" So far as I am concerned, I oppose it, if the expenditure is to be absolutely useless.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I did not make that appeal.

Mr. LAVELLE.—The right honorable gentleman did.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Not on that item. The honorable member is wrong again.

Mr. LAVELLE.—I know that the right honorable gentleman is always wrong; but that is no fault of mine. I object to this expenditure, if we are to obtain no benefit from it. When the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill was before this House an amendment was moved to the effect that no wages fixed should be less than the basic wage recommended by the Basic Wage Commission. The Government of which the Treasurer is a member refused to accept that amendment. They said, in effect, that no matter what recommendation the Basic Wage Commission may make, they will take no notice of it. Yet we find an expenditure of £10,000 in connexion with that Commission.

I shall refer now to another item of £15,000, Australia's contribution to the League of Nations. That reminds me that when the Great War was being fought we were told that it was a war to make the world safe for Democracy, and to end war. The honorable member for Robertson (Mr. Fleming) stated the other day that it was all nonsense for any one to speak like that; but while the war was in progress those who were gulling the people frequently said that it was a war to end war. Later on, they said that the League of Nations was to be a guarantee of the peace of the world. In the words of the Prime Minister, it was to bring us into "the green fields of peace." Now, although the League of Nations is in ex-

istence, and we are called upon to make a contribution to its upkeep of £15,000, we find that it is absolutely impotent to prevent wars in the future. And in spite of the League of Nations, and all that has been done in the past to preserve the peace of the world, Australia is to be saddled this year with an expenditure of nearly £10,000,000 for the military and the Navy. If the League of Nations is going to insure peace—

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Is the honorable member against the League of Nations?

Mr. LAVELLE.—I can tell the right honorable gentleman that I am against expending nearly £10,000,000 of the money of the people of Australia on defence. If he can point out to me that the League of Nations will do anything to preserve the peace of the world, or to give us a guarantee of peace in the future, I shall be prepared to listen to him very attentively.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I could point out many things to the honorable member, but he would not understand them.

Mr. LAVELLE.—If the right honorable gentleman is unable to make a statement that can be understood, the fault is not mine if I cannot understand him.

Another item of expenditure to which some reference might be made is one of £20,000 to be lent to the Westralian Farmers Association to build silos. I suppose that some one will say that the man who opposes that item is not a friend to the farmers.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The honorable member for Swan (Mr. Prowse), who is responsible for that, is present.

Mr. LAVELLE.—I see that he is. I listened with attention when we were told that the Westralian Farmers Agreement Bill was the Bill of the honorable member for Swan (Mr. Prowse), and that the Butter Agreement Bill was the Bill of another member of the Country party. This proves conclusively that there is a working arrangement between the Nationalist party and the Country party, and that is the reason why we always find members of the Country party coming to the assistance of the Government when they are in danger.

Mr. PROWSE.—The Westralian Farmers Agreement Bill embodies a sound investment.

Mr. LAVELLE.—A very sound investment, but if the Westralian Farmers

Co-operative Grain Society, or whatever it is termed, goes broke, what will become of the £20,000 to which I have referred? I know that it will be said that the Government have advanced money to the States for the erection of silos to assist the man on the land, but that money was advanced to the State Governments, and we can be certain that it will be repaid. What I am referring to is an advance of £20,000 in support of the Western Australian speculation.

Mr. LISTER.—An advance of £500,000.

Mr. LAVELLE. — I believe that £500,000 is to be put into the venture of this private company, and, if it goes broke, the people of Australia will not get their money back. These considerations show that every time the Government are in danger the members of the Country party will come to their assistance.

I might ask why the Deputy Leader of the Country party (Mr. Jowett), who is supposed to have made a humorous speech last night, is absent from his place to-day. The honorable member for Bourke (Mr. Anstey) said that, if the Government were likely to be in any danger, the honorable member would discreetly retire from the battle ground. Why is the honorable member absent to-day? Is it not because there is a working arrangement between the two parties on the Government side?

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Does the honorable member suggest that the honorable member for Grampians (Mr. Jowett) will not be here when the vote is taken?

Mr. LAVELLE.—I do not suggest that at all. I say definitely that he will not be here.

Mr. TUDOR.—What are the odds?

Mr. LAVELLE.—I will bet ten to one that the honorable gentleman will find, when the division on the amendment is taken, that the Government will be saved because some of the members of the Country party will be absent without having secured pairs, or some will be found voting with the Government.

I have no desire to further take up the time of the Committee, and will reserve to myself the right, if the Government do not try to rush the business through with the gag, to criticise the various items of expenditure in detail when they are submitted to us.

Question—That the item be reduced by £1 (Mr. McWILLIAMS' amendment)—put. The Committee divided.

Ayes	22
Noes	26

Majority	4
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AYES.

Anstey, F.
Brennan, F.
Considine, M. P.
Cook, Robert
Gabb, J. M.
Gibson, W. G.
Hill, W. C.
Lavelle, T. J.
Mahon, H.
Makin, N. J. O.
Maloney, Dr.
McGrath, D. C.

McWilliams, W. J.
Moloney, Parker
Page, Dr. Earle
Page, James
Prowse, J. H.
Ryan, T. J.
Tudor, F. G.
Wienscholt, A.

Tellers:

Mahony, W. G.
Watkins, D.

NOES.

Atkinson, L.
Bamford, F. W.
Bayley, J. G.
Blundell, R. P.
Bruce, S. M.
Cameron, D. C.
Cook, Sir Joseph
Corser, E. B. C.
Fleming, W. M.
Foster, Richard
Fowler, J. M.
Francis, F. H.
Greene, W. M.
Groom, L. E.

Higgs, W. G.
Hughes, W. M.
Livingston, J.
Mackay, G. H.
Marks, W. M.
Marr, C. W. C.
Poynton, A.
Rodgers, A. S.
Smith, Laird
Wise, G. H.

Tellers:

Burchell, R. J.
Story, W. H.

PAIRS.

McDonald, C.
West, J. E.
Blakeley, A.
Riley, E.
Charlton, M.
Cunningham, L. L.
Lazzarini, H. P.
Mathews, J.
Fenton, J. E.
Nicholls, S. R.
Catts, J. H.

Bowden, E. K.
Chapman, Austin
Lamond, Hector
Lister, J. H.
Ryrie, Sir Granville
Watt, W. A.
Bell, G. J.
Jackson, D. S.
Best, Sir Robert
Maxwell, G. A.
Johnson, Sir Elliot

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

ESTIMATES, 1920-1921.

THE PARLIAMENT.

Division 1 (Senate) £8,711.

Dr. MALONEY (Melbourne) [3.25].—

This division relates to salaries of officers of the Senate, and affords me another opportunity to enter my protest against the attitude taken up by a certain dictator in refusing to supply honorable members of this House with information relating to the salaries of officers of the

Parliament. It is time that we had a Select Committee to inquire into the whole matter. It is absurd that there should be, in connexion with the Parliament, five different Departments. We all know that the public servant who is in the immediate presence of his "boss," has the best chance of advancement, and in the five Departments of the Parliament promotions are much more rapid than in all other branches of the Public Service which are under the control of the Public Service Commissioner. Officers of the Parliament are under the control of the President and Mr. Speaker. A man such as the present dictator—I refer to the President of the Senate (Senator Givens)—may employ any one he pleases, and Parliament is powerless to interfere. If the Committee has any idea of fair play, and any desire for economy, it should not allow him to have such a power. Where the offices of President and Speaker are occupied by gentlemen, even a bad system of regulations will run smoothly. Such regulations, fairly administered, may often prove better than the best set of laws that are badly administered. This is the most contemptible sweating institution in any part of the Public Service. We pay the Public Service Commissioner—a man of high intelligence—a high salary, and I would vote to-morrow to place every officer of the Parliament under his control. I have no complaint to make of the way in which Mr. Speaker (Sir Elliot Johnson) exercises his authority over the staff of this House, nor have I any complaint to make of the officials of the House. I strongly resent, however, what has been done in another place. My fellow members of the Library Committee will agree with me that that Committee is simply a farce, since it has no power to make a recommendation in reference to the position or salaries of the Library staff. It may be that we are on the verge of a general resignation as a protest against the actions of that dictator—a man whom I used to love and revere as one who, I thought, was pre-eminently a lover of his fellow men. Lately, however, he seems to love only those who are best paid in the building. Some of our officers were paid lower wages than the unions have a right by law to demand. The secretary of the Lift Attendants Union told me that the President of

the Senate was telling an untruth when he said that all the officers in this Parliament were being paid the full rates to which they were entitled. I do not know that there is any such case at the present moment, but as long as I live I will resent the attitude of this dictator in regard to one married man, with children, who received only £2 14s. per week. He became ill, and was absent from his duties in order to rest himself, and, having a family to support, he could not pay for medical advice. One officer—I do not know whether it was Mr. Monahan or Mr. Broinowski—cautioned this unfortunate man that if he did not resume duty he might lose his position. He returned to work when he was still unfit, caught a chill, and died, and his widow and children have received nothing but the sum of money that was collected amongst the fellow-officers of the deceased. Another man was fined £2 because Mr. Broinowski said that he had insulted him. I believe that was a lie, and if a Select Committee is appointed I am prepared to produce a sworn declaration to that effect.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—All these matters relate to the Senate, which this House does not control.

Dr. MALONEY.—It is against what has taken place in the Senate Department that I am protesting. Another young man was compelled to be inoculated with influenza serum, and, having regard to the fact that the President of the Senate, when he was inoculated with filth, nearly lost his life in the Sydney Quarantine Station, one would think that he would have more compassion for a man who has an injured arm as a result of the inoculation.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I am loath to rise to a point of order; but I do not think the honorable member should be attacking the President of the Senate.

Dr. MALONEY.—This is the only opportunity I shall have.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—These remarks are quite out of order. The rule and tradition of centuries is that the members of one Chamber should not attack the members of the other Chamber. We shall have every opportunity to discuss the Estimates for the House of Representatives.

Dr. MALONEY.—I shall not be able to deal with these matters then.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—We have no more right to attack the officers of the Senate than members of the Senate have to attack our officers.

Mr. WATKINS.—The Committee is now dealing with the Estimates for the Senate and its officers. Certain members of this House are supposed to have an opportunity of attending meetings of a Joint House Committee.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—We have no right to single out for personal criticism even a private member of another place.

Mr. WATKINS.—I claim that when the Estimates for the Senate are under consideration honorable members are quite in order in discussing everything that is relevant to those Estimates.

Dr. MALONEY.—In the State Parliament, the Legislative Council occupies a position corresponding to that of the Senate in this Legislature, and I can prove by reference to the Victorian *Hansard* that the Legislative Council has been under severe criticism at times in the Legislative Assembly.

The CHAIRMAN (Hon. J. M. Chanter).—The Treasurer has raised the point of order that it is unusual and improper to refer to the President of another place. Whether such references are correct or otherwise, this Chamber has to deal with the Estimates of salaries and expenditure for the Senate. The vote for the President himself has been agreed to, and the whole of the general expenses of the Senate are now before the Committee. Whilst I have no desire to restrict honorable members in their remarks, I ask the honorable member for Melbourne (Dr. Maloney) to have regard to parliamentary usage, and employ respectful language in his references to a member of another place.

Dr. MALONEY.—I think you, sir, have given a just decision. When every member of this Parliament has personally benefited by an increase of salaries, it is only fair that we should look after those who are struggling along in the lower-paid positions. Owing to the action of a particular gentleman—there can be no objection to my calling him that—some men in the building are not getting a fair show. Although one man has been fined for having insulted an officer, I am prepared to produce sworn evidence that the statement made by Mr. Broinowski

was wrong. I also draw attention to the idiocy of having five separate Departments in this building. Do our officers altogether number 100? According to the Estimates, the number in the Senate Department is sixteen. When I asked for certain information regarding the wages paid to officers and men whom I meet in this building almost every day of my life, I am told that I cannot get that information because a certain gentleman will not allow me to have it. The Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes), to his credit, supported my request, and showed great sympathy with it. But he, too, is helpless. Is this a sign of the autocratic government of the past?

Mr. CONSIDINE.—No, it is a sign of the autocratic government of the President.

Dr. MALONEY.—Honorable members have only to read *Hansard* as to what occurred in another place yesterday, and then they will see that gentleman in the light I am indicating here. If we thought it necessary to increase our salaries, surely we can look after those who, if they were in outside employment, would be drawing bigger money than they are drawing here.

Mr. POYNTON.—Do you not think that that applies to some of those at the top, too?

Dr. MALONEY.—We have some very fine officers, and we have some who are not quite so fine. The honorable member will agree with me that once our officers are appointed to permanent positions they do not have to face their creators, like he and I have to do, at least once in every three years. I am glad the Prime Minister has come in, because I wish to remind him of the request I made recently for information about the salaries and allowances of certain officials of the Parliament. He was sympathetic with my endeavour, and assisted me as far as he could. As the member for Melbourne, I am asking for this information, but I am prevented from obtaining it, as regards the Senate, by the dogmatic, dog-in-the-manger action of a certain gentleman. I am allowed to use the word "gentleman."

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—When you have said and done everything you care to do and say, the Government cannot do anything about it.

Dr. MALONEY.—The Government can move for the appointment of a Joint Committee to go into the question of the absurdity of having five distinct and separate Departments in this Parliament, and also into the matter of limiting the power of any single gentleman, such as the one I have mentioned.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I think not.

Dr. MALONEY.—Then it is time we took action, even if we have to wipe out the whole blooming Senate. What an absurd idea it is that two men should dominate the Parliament! Is the appointment of Sessional Committees merely a fool game? It is ridiculous to appoint Committees if they have no power. I am a member of the Library Committee, and so is the honorable member for Robertson (Mr. Fleming). I am not going to submit quietly to the present state of affairs. If any member of that Committee moves for a Committee of inquiry, I shall welcome the motion, and vote for it.

Mr. GREGORY (Dampier) [3.45].—I wish to make a complaint as well as a personal explanation. It was agreed between the parties that we should take a division at 2.30. Then the division was postponed until 3.30. I thought that arrangement would be kept by all parties, and, at the request of our party, I went into the Speaker's room to discuss with him certain arrangements affecting us. The division was taken at an earlier hour than had been arranged, and I did not hear the bells.

Mr. TUDOR.—Did not the bells ring in the Speaker's room?

Mr. GREGORY.—No. There may be many members on the Opposition side who make speeches and then dodge the responsibility of voting; I do not.

Mr. LAVELLE.—Your leader knew before 3 o'clock that the division would be taken at 3.20.

Mr. GREGORY.—The honorable member should not make statements that really are untrue.

Mr. LAVELLE.—Do not tell me that I am making untrue statements here or anywhere else, or I will screw your neck.

The CHAIRMAN (Hon. J. M. Chanter).—Order! Will the honorable member withdraw and apologize?

Mr. LAVELLE.—Must I withdraw when a man tells me I am making an untrue statement, seeing that my statement is absolutely true?

The CHAIRMAN.—If honorable members, by their constant conversations and interjections, will not allow the Chairman to hear what is said, they have themselves to blame. If I had heard the honorable member for Dampier (Mr. Gregory) attribute an untruth to the honorable member for Calare (Mr. Lavelle), I should immediately have called him to order. If the honorable member for Dampier did make that statement I ask him to withdraw it, and I ask the honorable member for Calare, also, to withdraw what he said.

Mr. LAVELLE.—I withdraw my statement, and also express my regret that you could hear what I said, but could not hear what was said over there.

The CHAIRMAN.—Order! I ask the honorable member to withdraw that remark, and not to try to come into direct conflict with the Chair. I have no desire for a conflict, but I will do my duty. I ask the honorable member to withdraw unconditionally.

Mr. LAVELLE.—I was only expressing regret that you did not hear all that was said. It is not fair of you to ask me to withdraw my expression of regret for something about which I was genuinely sorry.

The CHAIRMAN.—The honorable member's remark was a direct inference that I was favoring another honorable member as against him.

Mr. LAVELLE.—Then I withdraw the remark.

Mr. GREGORY.—I also withdraw my statement. I simply meant that what the honorable member said was inaccurate, because the leader of our party had given us to understand distinctly that the division would be taken at 3.30. I was in the Speaker's room discussing matters with him, and had not the remotest idea that the division was being taken. I came out close on 3.30, and found that the division had taken place.

Mr. PARKER MOLONEY.—Did not the bells ring in the Speaker's room?

Mr. GREGORY.—I have already said that they did not. Surely honorable members will take my word. My complaint is that the first arrangement was to take the division at 2.30, and the next to take it at 3.30, and then, at the request of my leader, the honorable member for Franklin (Mr. McWilliams), I went into the Speaker's room to discuss a certain matter with the Speaker.

I wish to emphasize the fact that my absence was absolutely unintentional. I do not know whether the Treasurer can tell us, but I should like to know if any of the various Committees appointed by this House have any control over the apportioning of rooms, and so forth, for the use of members. Has the House any say or control in such matters?

Mr. LAVELLE (Calare) [3.50].—By way of personal explanation, I wish to say that my statement in regard to the time when it was arranged the division would be taken is quite true; and, further, that I was not a party to the agreement to take it at half-past 2. On the contrary, I said I would reserve to myself the right to speak before the vote was taken, and that I intended to speak, whether the division was taken at half-past 2 or afterwards. In justice to the honorable member for Perth (Mr. Fowler), I ought to say that he came and asked if I proposed to speak; and I told him that I intended to do so if no one else did. The honorable member then said that he also would speak. I said that I would conclude in time to enable the vote to be taken at half-past 3, so as to enable honorable members to catch their trains, and that if the honorable member for Perth finished at 3 o'clock, I would not occupy more than twenty minutes. I say this in reply to the charge made by the honorable member for Dampier that my statement was incorrect. If it was not convenient for the honorable member to take part in the division, that is his "funeral."

Mr. McWILLIAMS (Franklin) [3.53].—What the honorable member for Dampier (Mr. Gregory) has said is quite correct. He went into Mr. Speaker's room at the request of the members of the Country party, to discuss the provisions of some accommodation for that party. When he left the Chamber the distinct understanding was that the division would be taken at half-past 3.

Mr. LAVELLE.—With whom was that understanding?

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—It was an understanding amongst the leaders of all parties.

Mr. TUDOR.—This is the first time I have heard of half-past 3 as the hour.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—The honorable member happened to be absent, and the arrangement was made with the honorable member for Dalley (Mr. Mahony)—who was acting as Whip—for the convenience of all parties. The first arrangement was for half-past 2 o'clock; then it was altered to 3 o'clock; and, later still, to half-past 3 o'clock.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Is it a fact that Mr. Speaker will not give the Country party a room?

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Yes. I thought the division bells would ring in Mr. Speaker's room.

Mr. TUDOR (Yarra) [3.55].—When I came to the House this morning, I ascertained that the division had been arranged for half-past 2 o'clock. The Treasurer (Sir Joseph Cook) concluded his remarks shortly after that hour, and then the honorable member for Perth (Mr. Fowler) rose. I knew that the honorable member for Calare (Mr. Lavelle) desired to speak, and advised him that, as the arrangement had been broken, he had the right to do so. I never knew of any subsequent arrangement. When the division was not taken at half-past 2 o'clock, I told some friends of mine in the gallery, that, under the circumstances, it was quite possible it might not take place to-day, and they decided to go away. However, when the honorable member for Calare told me that he would occupy only about twenty minutes, I brought them back again. I am surprised to learn that the division bells do not ring in every room of the House, though, of course, the arrangement may be to call Mr. Speaker in some other way.

Proposed vote agreed to.

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT.

COAL PRICES—CASE OF THE REV. J. B. RONALD—DIVISION BELLS.

Mr. HUGHES (Bendigo—Prime Minister and Attorney-General) [3.59].—I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

I desire to inform honorable members that I have received, through His Excellency the Governor-General, the following further interim report from the Royal Commission which is inquiring into the increases in the price of coal consequent

on increases in the wage rates. It is as follows:—

Your Commissioners recommend, pending further inquiry and final report for sales within Commonwealth, the following increases on and from Monday, 27th September, 1920:—

Western Australia coal mines, 3s. per ton.

Queensland coal mines, Ipswich and Bundamba district, 2s. 9d. per ton.

Rosewood and Darling Downs district, excluding Tannymorell, 3s. per ton.

Tannymorell, 3s. 6d. per ton.

Burrum district, 5s. per ton.

Central district, 2s. 3d. per ton.

Mount Mulligan, 5s. 6d. per ton.

Provided that, in the case of Queensland only, where the proprietor of a coal mine is obliged to deliver coal at a distance from pit-head, and to pay railway-freight thereon, said proprietor shall be entitled to add to above increases the actual increases in railway freight, if any, that have been made since 27th September, 1920, or that may hereafter be made whilst this order, if made, remains in force.

I only want to remind honorable members that this is not the final report. They will have an opportunity of studying the return, as set out in the press, and of thinking the matter over. When we get the final report it may be discussed.

Mr. TUDOR (Yarra) [4.2].—I should like to know the order of business for next week. Are we going on with the Estimates?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Yes.

Dr. MALONEY (Melbourne) [4.3].—I think it is right I should bring under the notice of the House the case of that unfortunate man, the Rev. J. B. Ronald. I have received the following letters from Messrs. Davies & Campbell, dated Collins-street, 12th October, 1920:—

Our attention has been drawn to certain remarks made by you in the House, with reference to the payments to Mrs. Ronald which have been made by Mrs. R. Harper. You are well aware that the promise made by Mr. Harper, which was quite voluntary, was only prevented from being carried out by his death. The executors could not legally do anything in the matter, but Mrs. Harper and her family resolved to carry out the intention of the deceased by paying Mrs. Ronald £1 per week during her life. There is no ground for your statement that this was to be during Mrs. Harper's life only. Our clients feel that you have done them a grave injustice, and we must ask you to withdraw a statement which was absolutely untrue.

The solicitor I interviewed informed me that this firm lacked even the courtesy which legal gentlemen usually extend to

other people. I do not care to write to this firm, but, if I did, I would write a letter in the following terms to J. M. Campbell, or A. E. Davies, whoever wrote to me:—

Sir,—Yours of 12th received. I have no respect for any one connected with that awful case of perjury and conspiracy (Ronald v. Harper). If Mrs. Harper, that dear lady, the daughter of a good man (God rest him), writes me that any statement made by me is wrong, I will gladly accept it.

I have been informed that the money paid to those conspirators and perjurers who lied in the witness-box came from that office, and so I shall never write to that firm or recognise one of them. I am sorry that out of the rich man's wealth something could not be done for the man who was so terribly wronged.

Mr. LAVELLE (Calare) [4.4].—I merely wish to draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to the fact that it has been stated that the bells did not ring in the Speaker's room prior to the division which was taken this afternoon, and that one honorable member excused his absence from the division on that account. As probably you may not be aware of what took place, I thought it only right that you should be informed.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—There is no division bell in the Speaker's room, but there is one in the vicinity, and I distinctly heard it ringing.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

House adjourned at 4.5 p.m.

House of Representatives.

Tuesday, 19 October, 1920.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson) took the chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

AUSTRALIAN SOFT WOODS.

PAPER PULP.

Dr. EARLE PAGE asked the Minister for Trade and Customs—

1. Whether it is a fact that exhaustive investigations of the extensive softwood scrubs of the Clarence Valley, New South Wales immediately adjacent to the proposed Gorge Hydro-electric Development, have been conducted by the Technological Museum in New South Wales?

2. Do these laboratory investigations demonstrate that these softwoods resemble closely the American timbers in the production of paper pulp in length of fibre and general microscopic characters?

3. Will he make available the results of these investigations?

4. If favorable, in view of the fact that the whole Australian paper supply could be drawn from this area, will he secure a practical test of suitability of these timbers for paper-making?

Mr. GREENE.—Inquiry is being made with a view to obtaining the information sought.

BONUS FOR OIL DISCOVERY.

Dr. EARLE PAGE (for Mr. GREGORY) asked the Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

Whether, in connexion with the Government's offer of a bonus for the discovery of payable oil in Australia, he will have a regulation or Ordinance dealing with the same gazetted, so that the claim for such bonus, wholly or in part, made by a prospector or an original discoverer of an oil-bearing area may receive consideration.

Sir JOSEPH COOK (for Mr. HUGHES).—Full particulars as to the conditions governing the payment of the reward of £50,000 for the discovery of petroleum oil in commercial quantities in Australia have already been published in the issues of the *Commonwealth Gazette* of the 2nd January and 23rd September, 1920.

POSTMASTER-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT.

LINESMEN, SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Mr. MAKIN asked the Postmaster-General, *upon notice*—

1. Whether linesmen employed in the service of the Postal Department in South Australia during the period of the recent war were refused permission to enlist for active service?

2. Whether, concerning examinations for promotions, the Department is prepared to give the same consideration to such employees who were refused permission to enlist as to returned soldiers?

Mr. WISE.—The answers to the honorable member's questions are as follow:—

1. The Deputy Postmaster-General, Adelaide, advises that there is no record of linemen employed in the Postmaster-General's Department, South Australia, being refused permission to enlist for active service during the period of the recent war.

2. The Public Service Commissioner, within whose province this matter lies, advises that, if the honorable member will state the examinations he refers to, and the nature of the consideration he desires extended, a reply will be furnished.

HINDMARSH TELEPHONE SUBSCRIBERS.

Mr. MAKIN asked the Postmaster-General, *upon notice*—

1. Whether the telephone subscribers in the district of Hindmarsh, which is 3 miles distant from the Central Exchange, Adelaide, were required to pay £6 per year annual rental prior to the increased telephone charges, while subscribers in the districts of Glenelg and Brighton, 6½ and 9½ miles distant from Adelaide respectively, were only required to pay £4 per year annual rental?

2. If so, will the Government give equal consideration to subscribers in the Hindmarsh district by the installation of a local exchange, and thus afford an equalization of telephone rental rates?

Mr. WISE.—Inquiries are being made, and replies will be furnished as early as possible.

NATIONAL SONG FOR AUSTRALIA.

Mr. GABB asked the Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

1. Whether it is fact that different songs of Australia are rendered in the schools of the various States?

2. If so, as he stated, that Australia had developed a national consciousness in the great war, will he consider the advisability of some body being appointed to decide upon a distinctly Australian national song, so that there may be uniformity in the schools of Australia in this matter?

Sir JOSEPH COOK (for Mr. HUGHES)—

1. The Prime Minister is unaware.

2. See answer to No. 1.

FEDERAL INCOME TAX.

EXEMPTION OF STATE LOANS.

Mr. MARR (for Mr. MARKS) asked the Treasurer, *upon notice*—

1. What arrangements, if any, have been made by the Federal Government with any of the State Governments as to the exemption of State loans from Federal income tax?

2. If so, (a) what State comes under such exemption; (b) what was the nature of the arrangement with the New South Wales Government as to the exemption of the present New South Wales loan from Federal income tax, the date of such arrangement, and who was the Federal Minister who agreed to it?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—No arrangements have been entered into with the State Governments in respect of the exemption of interest on State loans from Federal income tax. There seems to be some doubt as to the legal position in this matter; but up to the present the Com-

monwealth has not taxed interest derived from State investments.

GENEVA CONFERENCE.

Mr. MAKIN asked the Prime Minister, *upon notice*—

1. Whether the Government is in receipt of official reports or communications concerning the abandonment of the Geneva Conference?

2. Has the Government any knowledge concerning the reported statement of the Premier of Belgium that the Geneva Conference will not be held, and that he believed successful negotiations had taken place between himself and Mr. Lloyd George concerning the reparation to be paid by Germany?

3. If so, is it the intention of the Government to recall Senator Millen, who is at present proceeding to Geneva to attend the aforementioned Conference?

4. If the Government does not intend recalling Senator Millen, what will now constitute the mission abroad of Senator Millen?

Sir JOSEPH COOK (for Mr. HUGHES).—The Government has not been informed that the first meeting of the Assembly of the League of Nations to be held at Geneva, on 15th November, 1920, has been abandoned. It would appear that the Conference to which the Premier of Belgium is reported to have referred is one quite distinct from the Assembly of the League of Nations.

RETURNED SOLDIERS.

REFUSAL OF LOAN.

Mr. RODGERS.—On the 19th August, the honorable member for Lilley (Mr. Mackay) asked the following questions:—

1. Whether the Minister is aware that returned soldier applicants who desire to purchase or improve land of freehold tenure have been refused a loan by the Soldiers' Land Settlement Board in Queensland?

2. Will the Minister endeavour to induce the Government of Queensland to adopt a more generous policy with regard to soldier land settlers who disapprove of leasehold tenure and are debarred from the privileges obtainable in other States of the Commonwealth?

A promise was made to communicate with the Queensland Government in reference to the matter, and I am now in a position to furnish the further following information:—

The State Government advises as follows by wire:—

"Land of freehold tenure is made available to soldier land settlers under the following conditions:—

Applicants must be approved by Land Settlement Committee of Queensland War

Council. Applicants must (1) possess practical experience; (2) know the district or have lived in the district and have relatives or friends where land is situated; (3) no advance shall exceed 75 per cent. of approved valuation of holding and improvements, if any, and stock, implements, machinery, plant, and fruit trees, if any, included in purchase. Maximum advance shall not exceed £1,200, and as to first £625 of this advance, no advance shall exceed amount of fair estimated value of holding and improvements if any thereon, exclusive of such stock, implements, machinery, plant, and fruit trees; and as to £575 balance of said maximum amount, no such advance shall exceed rate of 15s. in £1 of fair estimated value of holding and improvements, if any, thereon, exclusive of such stock, implements, machinery, plant, and fruit trees."

NORTHERN TERRITORY.

TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION WITH QUEENSLAND.

Mr. WISE.—On 13th October, the honorable member for Capricornia (Mr. Higgs) asked the following questions:—

1. By what route does a telegram travel when sent from Rockhampton to Darwin, *i.e.*, what are the repeating stations, and the distance travelled?

2. Will the Minister obtain an estimate of the distance and of the cost of erecting a telegraph line between Camooweal (Queensland) and Powell's Creek (Northern Territory)?

3. Will the Minister obtain an opinion from competent experts as to whether such a telegraph line would assist in the development of the Barkly tableland, in the Northern Territory?

I promised the information would be obtained, and am now able to furnish the following reply:—

1. The route by which a telegram travels from Rockhampton to Darwin is as follows:—From Rockhampton to Brisbane; Brisbane to Sydney; Sydney to Adelaide; Adelaide to Darwin. Approximate distance travelled, 4,100 miles. Brisbane, Sydney, and Adelaide are the repeating stations.

2. The Deputy Postmaster-General, Brisbane, reports:—"The approximate distance is 364 miles, and the estimated cost of erecting a line of single copper wire, £60,000. The District Inspector advises that the district contains little or no timber suitable for poles."

3. The Deputy Postmaster-General, Brisbane, reports:—"Postal inspector for the district advises—Intervening country practically all selected under leasehold tenure in large areas, approximating between 300 and 500 square miles. Several holdings fairly well stocked with cattle. Population very sparse. Telegraph facilities would be a convenience, principally for notifying stock movements."

No further information can be obtained as to what extent proposed line would assist in development of the Barkly tableland."

MOTION OF CENSURE.

Mr. TUDOR.—I give notice that to-morrow I shall move—

That the Government be censured for their failure to make provision for the payment of 5s. per bushel cash at railway sidings for this season's wheat.

Sir JOSEPH COOK (Parramatta—Treasurer) [3.7].—(*By leave.*)—I wish to make a statement to avoid seeming discourteous to the Leader of the Opposition. Under ordinary circumstances the Government would have moved the adjournment of the House—

Mr. TUDOR.—It ought to be done now.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—But we have already had some half-dozen motions of censure this session.

Mr. TUDOR.—Only two.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—In the absence of the Prime Minister this matter could well go over for determination until to-morrow, particularly as the motion relates to a matter which, in its nature, is not urgent.

Mr. LAVELLE.—It is very urgent.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I can conceive of no urgency other than for reasons of a local character. I hope that the Leader of the Opposition will acquit me of want of courtesy if I suggest that in the circumstances the best thing is to leave this matter over for consideration until the return of the Prime Minister to-morrow.

Mr. TUDOR (Yarra) [3.9].—(*By leave.*)—I moved the adjournment of the House three or four weeks ago to discuss the matter which I propose to raise again to-morrow; but it was impossible to take a vote on it on that occasion. Many honorable members of other parties feel as strongly on this subject as do members of the Labour party. A definite pledge or promise, or, as the Prime Minister said once, threat, was made at Bendigo in regard to the wheat. It has been suggested that the motion is to be moved because the Victorian election is close at hand, but I am merely following up my action of a month ago, when the date of the election had not been fixed. I do not think that the debate on my motion will be long drawn out. It could be short and sharp, and followed by a vote which would determine whether the Government

has done right or wrong. I realize that in the absence of the Prime Minister his deputy is in a difficult position. If the Government intend to treat the motion, as they ought to do, as one of censure, the only logical course for them to pursue is to move the adjournment of the House. The motion could then be discussed to-morrow in the presence of the Prime Minister. It cannot be discussed in his absence, and I take it that the duty of the Government is not to proceed with any business until it has been disposed of. They should take the ordinary course, and adjourn the House now until to-morrow.

Mr. GREGORY.—What is the use of wasting time?

Mr. TUDOR.—There is no waste of time involved. This should be treated as a *bonâ fide* motion of censure. It is incorrect to say that already during the session half-a-dozen such motions have been submitted, but a motion of censure will be proposed in connexion with every failure on the part of the Government to do its duty.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—I desire leave to say a few words.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. Sir Elliot Johnson).—Order! I would again call the attention of honorable members to an unfortunate and irregular practice which has arisen of late, and which, if developed, is likely to bring the business of the House into a state of chaos. Leave is asked, generally by a Minister, to make a statement, and, as a matter of courtesy, is usually granted. The Minister has no sooner completed his statement than another honorable member asks leave to make a statement, and honorable members naturally desiring to be uniformly courteous, as a rule, do not object. This usually takes the form of a reply to the original statement by the Leader of the Opposition. I would point out, however, that if other honorable members are to obtain such leave, we shall constantly be having an irregular debate, just as we have now, with no question before the Chair. This procedure is contrary to all the procedure and practice of Parliament, and I hope that honorable members will realize the unwisdom of a practice which, if encouraged, must set at naught all rules for the orderly conduct of business. If the honorable member for Darling (Mr.

Blakeley) desires leave to make a statement—

Mr. BLAKELEY.—I ask leave to make a statement.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Is it the pleasure of the House that the honorable member have leave to make a statement?

MINISTERIAL MEMBERS.—No.

PAPERS.

The following papers were presented:—

Public Service Act—Promotion of J. D. Chettle, Prime Minister's Department.

War Gratuity Act—Regulations amended—Statutory Rules 1920, No. 154.

ESTIMATES 1920-21.

In Committee of Supply (Consideration resumed from 15th October, *vide* page 5718):

THE PARLIAMENT.

Divisions 2 to 10, £40,028.

Mr. GREGORY (Dampier) [3.15].—

As this proposed vote relates to the House of Representatives, I should like the attendance of the honorable the Speaker (Sir Elliot Johnson). Several of us wish to discuss matters relating to the powers of the House Committee and the Library Committee, and one does not like to make statements concerning them in the absence of Mr. Speaker.

The CHAIRMAN (Hon. J. M. Chanter).—Mr. Speaker will shortly be here.

Mr. GREGORY.—In connexion with the work of the Chamber, Committees are appointed for various purposes, and I think we should be enlightened as to their scope and power. As a member of the House Committee, I desire to know what powers and privileges that Committee possesses. I wish to know what control it has of the various matters with which it has to deal on behalf of the House. If Mr. Speaker and the President have absolute control, I have no objection to offer, provided that the House is so advised, and holds them wholly responsible for the administration of these details. But when Committees of the House are appointed, I think honorable members look to them to see that their privileges are conserved and convenience studied. Now that Mr. Speaker is present, I should be glad if he would let us know where, according to

precedents, the duties of the House Committee and Library Committee begin, and where they end. I understand that the Library Committee has recently passed a resolution in regard to the salaries of officers who come within their control. I do not think they have the power to increase or reduce the salaries of attendants; but, if they have, the House Committee should have the same power. As a member of the House Committee, I hope that no such authority rests in these Committees. The salaries of parliamentary officers should be dealt with either through the Conciliation and Arbitration Court, or in some other way, so that honorable members may not have to address themselves to such questions. At the same time, if, as a member of the House Committee, I am to be a mere dummy, I shall at once resign from that Committee.

Dr. MALONEY.—And I shall resign from the Library Committee.

Mr. GREGORY.—Unless we have certain powers enabling us to deal with the work properly appertaining to the House Committee, I am not prepared to remain for five minutes a member of that Committee.

Another matter to which I desire to refer is my failure to take part last Friday in the division on the motion moved by the Leader of the Country party (Mr. McWilliams) to reduce the first item of the Estimates by £1 as a direction to the Government to cut down the Estimates by £1,000,000. I have no desire to offer any excuse. My failure to take part in the division was due to a blunder, for which I accept the full responsibility; but I wish to put myself right as a member of this House. Those who know me will readily admit that I am not one of those who, having entered into a fight, will endeavour to sneak out of it; and I want to assure honorable members that it was because I did not hear the bells ringing for the division that I failed to put in an appearance. I read with much indignation in the newspapers on Saturday morning a statement attributed to Mr. Speaker, that, while I was talking to him in his own room, he had distinctly heard the bells in the ante-room ringing for the division. I was in his room at the time, but I did not hear the bells ring.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—If Mr. Speaker heard them ringing, he was right in saying that he heard them.

Mr. GREGORY.—What would one expect a gentleman to do in such circumstances? It was an important division.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—What does the honorable member want Mr. Speaker to do—to say that he did not hear the bells ringing?

Mr. GREGORY.—No; but if on such an occasion I were talking with the honorable member, or any one else, and heard the bells ringing for a division, I would at once draw attention to the fact.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—I suppose Mr. Speaker thought the honorable member did not wish to take part in the division.

Mr. GREGORY.—I put it to honorable members that a similar experience might befall any one of them. There are no bells in Mr. Speaker's room, but the bells might have been ringing in his ante-room while I was talking to him; and if he says that he heard them, I am satisfied that he did. We were discussing matters relating to the House Committee, to which I do not wish to refer here, and I certainly did not hear the bells ring. I should like to ask honorable members what they would have done in the circumstances. I notice by the newspaper reports that the Speaker himself was paired on this occasion with a member opposite.

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I did not know I was paired.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—It shows that he took more interest in the division than the honorable member did.

Mr. GREGORY.—But one would have assumed that, hearing the bells ringing for a division on a matter affecting our party, when I was discussing with him our party arrangements in the building, and speaking to him as a member of the Committee, he would say to me at once, as a matter of courtesy, "The bells are ringing for a division."

Mr. LAZZARINI.—Would you regard that as his duty?

Mr. GREGORY.—It was no duty of his, but there are very few members in this House, no matter what side they sit on, who would not have drawn attention to the fact that the bell in an ante-room was ringing either for a quorum or a division.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—Has not your party a Whip?

Mr. GREGORY.—The honorable member for Cowper (Dr. Earle Page) acts in that capacity for us, but the division took place without the members of our party realizing that I was not present. My leader, the honorable member for Franklin (Mr. McWilliams), knew where I had gone, but assumed I was present until too late.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—It is very odd when you want a member of another party to act as Whip for you.

Mr. GREGORY.—The honorable member knows I did not want anything of the kind. I am not appealing to the instincts of the honorable member, but to the instincts of the average member.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—Average members do not miss divisions as you do.

Mr. GREGORY.—I shall not pursue the subject. I hope some statement will be made to show what the powers of the Sessional Committees are, so that members may know where they stand, and that I for my part may know whether to remain on any of them or not. I do not care to accept responsibilities as a member of a Committee unless I know what the powers and duties of that Committee are. If the control and power are given to the Speaker of this House and the President of the Senate, I am quite prepared to abide by anything they do; but while we have Committees, the scope of their powers and duties should be understood by honorable members, so that we may be able to get along without friction.

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON (Lang) [3.23].

—With regard to what appears to be an imputation upon myself by the honorable member for Dampier (Mr. Gregory) of a lack of courtesy, in not notifying him that the division bells were ringing on Friday last, I can only say that I am surprised at the honorable member's statement. I certainly could not know by intuition that the honorable member did not hear sounds which were distinctly audible to myself. In any case, it is no part of my duty to tell any honorable member that a division bell is ringing, though I would certainly have done so as a matter of courtesy had I had any reason to believe that the sound of the bells was not audible to the honorable member for Dampier. The honorable member came into my room to

see me about certain other matters, and when we were in conversation the bells certainly did start ringing.

MR. BRENNAN.—He was not thinking of your duty so much as of your well-known courtesy.

SIR ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I could not assume that the honorable member did not hear a bell which was distinctly audible to myself. When I say "distinctly audible," I do not mean that the bell was ringing very loudly. As a matter of fact, it is rather subdued in tone, because it rings in only a very small area in the vicinity of my room, and not in my room itself. Every honorable member was, of course, aware that a division was expected about that time. The bell rang very audibly to my ears, at any rate for a while, but afterwards its sound was less distinct, and it is quite conceivable that the honorable member, with his back turned to the door, and speaking to me, did not really hear it. While the facts may exonerate him from blame for non-attendance at the division, it does not, I think, give him sufficient warrant for accusing me of lack of courtesy in not telling him that the bells were ringing, when I would naturally assume that he could hear the sound as distinctly as I could myself. I can conceive a situation where a reminder of the kind might not be desired, though I do not suggest it was so in this case. When the matter was reported to the Committee, the Serjeant-at-Arms immediately made inquiries in the neighbourhood and found that the bell had been ringing. When I say I distinctly heard it ringing, I do not wish by that remark to convey any imputation of untruthfulness whatever to the honorable member.

MR. GREGORY.—But you said you heard them distinctly.

SIR ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I did, but the honorable member may not have heard them. The reason why I heard them distinctly may be that I am accustomed to hear that bell. The honorable member is accustomed to hear louder bells in other parts of the building, and that fact would probably account for his not having heard this one. Had I known that he did not hear the bell, I should have reminded him that it was ringing. I hope the honorable member will absolve me

from any intentional discourtesy to him, and from any desire at all to place him at a disadvantage through his presence in my room. I am sure that honorable members who know me will absolve me from any such intention.

I am not prepared to express an opinion as to what powers the various Committees of the House are clothed with. Various Committees have been appointed in connexion with the House and the Library, but their duties and responsibilities, so far as I have been able to ascertain, have never been defined. Section 14 of the Public Service Act provides—

Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act—

(a) All appointments or promotions of officers of the Senate, and all regulations affecting such officers after their appointment, shall be made by the Governor-General on the nomination or recommendation of the President of the Senate;

Nothing is said there about any Committee of the Senate.

(b) All appointments or promotions of officers of the House of Representatives, and all regulations affecting such officers after their appointment, shall be so made on the nomination or recommendation of the Speaker.

No mention is made there of a Committee.

(c) All appointments or promotions of officers of both Houses of Parliament, and all regulations affecting such officers after their appointment, shall be so made on the joint nomination or recommendation of the said President and the Speaker.

There is no mention in any of those paragraphs of any of these statutory powers being conferred upon Committees; but, so far as I can see, the powers of the Committees are quite wide enough, outside of those questions, to embrace any other matters affecting either House or the two Houses jointly. Under the Public Service Act, matters affecting appointments, promotions, and regulations affecting officers of Parliament are reserved for the exclusive statutory nomination or recommendation of the President and the Speaker separately in respect of each House, and jointly in respect of both Houses.

MR. RICHARD FOSTER.—Has that ever been varied in practice in the past?

SIR ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I was just coming to that point. So far as the

Library is concerned, I have always made it a practice, as Chairman of the Library Committee, to follow precedents established by my predecessors in office, and submit for the concurrence of the members of the Committee proposals in relation to appointments, promotions, and salaries. I think it is always a wise policy for the Presiding Officer to fortify himself with the advice of those with whom he is associated on the Committees, even although the Committees have no statutory power of nomination or recommendation. It was only quite recently that I discovered that the Committees had not that power; my attention having been called to section 14 by an officer of the House, in consequence, I think, of a query by the Auditor-General in regard to some action that had been taken on one occasion. In order to satisfy my mind as to the actual position, I sought an opinion from the Solicitor-General, who informed me that the President and the Speaker are solely responsible, under the terms of the Act, for all appointments, promotions, &c., in the Library. The Committee may make a recommendation, but, in Sir Robert Garran's words, "it has no statutory status whatever, and no practice, however long continued, can deprive the President and the Speaker of their statutory powers, and they can ignore a recommendation of the Library Committee if they please. The terms of the appointment of the Library Committee give no indication of its duties or powers, and even a joint sitting is not provided for in the motion in the House of Representatives, though it is in the Senate." I spoke to Sir Robert Garran again this morning on the subject, and he confirmed the position as already explained. That opinion applies to all the Committees. So far as the House of Representatives is concerned, the Speaker is the only statutory authority provided for in regard to such matters. In the Department of the Senate, the President only is clothed with statutory authority. And in regard to questions of appointments, promotions, and salaries of staffs of the joint Houses, the President and the Speaker conjointly have the sole statutory power.

Mr. GREGORY.—Do salaries come within the control of the President and

Sir Elliot Johnson.

Speaker, or are they governed by awards of the Arbitration Court?

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—They are controlled by the President and the Speaker; but the President and I, after consultation, came to the conclusion that, as employees of Parliament have not the same facilities for appealing to the Arbitration Court as are enjoyed by outside employees engaged in similar occupations, it was only a reasonable policy, in their interests, that awards made in regard to similar officers of the general Service should apply also to officers of the Parliament. In the revision of salaries we have been guided by that view.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—Do I understand that officers of Parliament may approach the Arbitration Court?

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I have placed no obstacles in the way of officers appealing to the Arbitration Court or any other Tribunal which Parliament has appointed to deal with such matters. The present position is very unsatisfactory. In my opinion, neither the President nor the Speaker is competent to form a judgment as to what are fair and reasonable rates of pay for officers and employees of Parliament. Nor is any ordinary Committee of Parliament fortified with the necessary knowledge to do so. Such a decision requires a careful examination of all the conditions and circumstances in comparison with the conditions under which men in similar occupations outside the parliamentary service work. An investigation of that kind can best be done by some permanent officer who is acquainted with that class of work, and the President and I contemplate asking the Public Service Commissioner to lend us the services of an efficient and experienced officer to advise us in regard to the Parliamentary Service, pending a possible alteration in the Public Service Act, by which all Parliamentary officers will be brought under the control of the Commissioner, as far as classification and salaries are concerned, leaving them in all other respects under the control of the Presiding Officers of each House. The existing situation is very unsatisfactory. No matter what the Presiding Officers may do, some dissatisfaction is bound to result. For instance, some anomaly in the

conditions of employment in the Library or in the Department of the House of Representatives may be brought under the notice of the Speaker, who, in endeavouring to set right that anomaly, after consultation with the head of the Department concerned finds that he is creating disorganization in other Departments. As soon as one link is disturbed the whole chain gets out of gear, and the Speaker is met with protests from quite unexpected quarters regarding the effect of his action upon the seniority and right to promotion of other officers in other Departments of Parliament. The matter has then to be reconsidered, and a further adjustment made, but that, in turn, only leads to further dissatisfaction, requiring still more readjustments. This process is being continued throughout the year. I am safe in saying that there has never been a week while the House has been in session when I have not had before me questions of salaries, promotions, and seniority in one form or another. The whole subject is a veritable Chinese puzzle, and I should be glad to be relieved of the unpleasant duty and responsibility of constantly making these adjustments. My one desire is that everybody shall be fairly and adequately paid for the work he does; but even in that desire I am confronted with difficulties. If I were the sole authority in the building I would know exactly what to do, but the trouble is that, as soon as I endeavour to adjust the conditions of employees of the House of Representatives, my decision affects similar employees in the Department of the Senate. Naturally, the President of the Senate will resent my taking any action of the kind which involves a disarrangement of his staff without having previously consulted him in order to arrive at a uniform policy for both Houses. This difficulty cropped up in the early days of this Parliament between the then Speaker, Sir Frederick Holder, and the then President of the Senate, Sir Richard Baker. Any advantage conceded to employees in the House of Representatives was immediately made the basis of a claim for a similar concession to the employees of the Senate. The employees of the two Departments played against each other in turn, until an understand-

ing was arrived at as a result between the Presiding Officers that, in order to avoid continual complications and preserve a fair relationship between the different staffs, all decisions affecting the officers of both Houses should be the subject of consultation between the Speaker and the President.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—How does the remuneration paid to employees of the House compare with wages paid outside?

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I have been making some inquiries with regard to that matter. I have tried to secure information from Public Service officials, but the trouble is that, with the exception of employees of other Parliaments, there are no classes of employees in the Service so placed as to afford comparisons upon a fair basis with employees in this House. The nature of the work is different; the hours are different; and the circumstances, generally, differ.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—I mean, with regard to the payment of a living wage.

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—Again we are faced with difficulties, in the matter of the number of different awards made from time to time. So far as I can see, we can only be guided by awards which have been made in connexion with the Public Service.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—I had in mind that in New South Wales a standard wage has been fixed.

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—That is so, and a different standard has been fixed in Victoria.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—How do the salaries of employees in this House compare with the standards fixed in New South Wales and Victoria?

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—With the Victorian standard they compare very favorably. Only within the past two or three weeks there has been another award made in New South Wales, which excludes certain parts of the State; but the Public Service has, I understand, been expressly excluded from that award. As far as has been possible, endeavours have been made to adjust the salaries paid in this building in keeping with the terms of the most recent awards affecting the Federal Public Service; and those salaries will be subject to alterations from time to time as awards are varied. It is quite possible

that there may be further variations in the cost of living. The cost of living has increased since the rates to the lower-paid officers of the House were enhanced. I made inquiries only this morning from Mr. Knibbs upon the subject of the cost of living, and he informed me that, since the award was made, there certainly had been an increase in the cost of living. I am waiting now for further particulars from Mr. Knibbs, with a view to giving consideration to a request which has been made by the cleaners, through the heads of Departments concerned, for a further addition upon the increases already given.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—What is the wage of the lowest-paid employee in this House?

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—The lowest wage is £182. There are only two or three employees, however, who receive that sum. Beginning with the house-keeper, I will furnish the particulars of salaries paid to employees of this House. The housekeeper previously received a salary of £265. His present salary is £280. The next officer was receiving £216, which salary has been increased, under the present Estimates, to £250. The next in order on the messenger staff previously received £200 per annum. His salary is now £212; and, together with his bonus, the total which he receives is £232. There has really been an increase of £32 in the case of each of the messengers over and above last year's pay; that is, with increased salary and bonus combined. The next messenger previously received £184. His salary is now £196; and, with his bonus of £20, he is now receiving, in all, £216. The other two messengers previously received £168. Their salaries have been raised to £182, plus the bonus of £20 each, bringing their salaries up to £202.

Mr. MATHEWS.—It is intended, then, to pay them a bonus?

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—Yes; they are getting it, I understand, with their fortnightly salary, so that the total amount received is £202.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Of the junior messengers, one, receiving £196, is to get a bonus; also the two at £182?

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—Yes, so that the lowest sum, including bonus, paid to any messenger in this House is

now £202. These amounts hold good until the end of December next when the question of bonuses, I understand, may again be reviewed by the Arbitration Court. But, whatever may be the result of that review, the amounts paid to employees of the House will not be less than they are now receiving with their bonuses. That is to say, the lowest wage of the present messengers will amount to £202 if the bonuses remain as at present. If the bonus is increased by any new Public Service award, the amounts received will be subject to revision.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—Are the Arbitration Court awards followed?

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—So far as is possible, they are. In regard to cleaners, an award was made. They were previously receiving £158, and a bonus was given in addition. Upon this point I am speaking from memory, and subject to correction. But Mr. Justice Powers later reviewed these wages and awards, and discarded the bonus while increasing the ordinary rate of pay to absorb and extend it, and we have brought the cleaners' wages up to the amount specified in the award. In the course of his decision Mr. Justice Powers pointed out that the cost of living did not appear to be merely a temporary matter which was liable to be altered at any time; he added that he saw no possibility of the cost of living coming down immediately. He thought, in the circumstances, that it was not advisable to grant a bonus, but to permanently increase cleaners' salaries. Their wage, therefore, was increased from £158 to £182, in the terms of this award.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—That became a fixed salary?

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—Yes. In the fixed salary of £182 there was embodied the bonus, with something more. That is the amount which the cleaners are receiving at present. There are only three of them, but it is fair to say that one of the three really earns a little more, because he attends to members' luggage and other matters for which he receives an additional sum to his remuneration as cleaner augment his salary to some extent.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Do these men get the bonus?

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I have only just explained fully that they get now a

fixed increase instead of the bonus, in terms of the award. Of course, if the Arbitration Court awards them a bonus, the bonus will be paid to them. The amount of their salaries, therefore, is subject to any arrangement as to the payment of a bonus which the Court may award from time to time. But if the bonus be paid to them in addition to their salaries, what will immediately happen? The messengers, who at the present time receive £182 per year with the bonus, and who are supposed to be promoted from the ranks of the cleaners, will then possess no advantage over the cleaners, and fresh complications as to status, seniority, salary and promotion will at once arise.

Mr. MATHEWS.—In another place, there are no such officers as cleaners. Upon the Senate side of the building, they are all messengers.

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—We have cleaners here.

Mr. MATHEWS.—They do the work of messengers.

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—No. So far as the cleaners are concerned, I have an application from them under consideration at the present time. I have already had a preliminary consultation with the President of the Senate upon the subject of salaries.

Mr. WATKINS.—Does the President of the Senate have a voice in the fixing of the salaries of officers and attendants of this House?

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—No. Perhaps the honorable member did not catch the explanation which I made earlier in my remarks. I then pointed out that the salaries attaching to employees of both Houses must bear some relation to each other. If the salaries granted to employees of the Senate were raised by the President without any reference as to what the Speaker of this Chamber proposed to do in regard to the salaries of employees of this House, naturally there would at once be a protest by the employees of the House of Representatives, and *vice versa*. A demand would at once be made by officers of similar rank for similar treatment. Whatever was done in one House would be used as a claim for the same thing to be done in the other branch of the Legislature, and thus we should have continual trouble in adjustments and re-adjustments. To avoid

that as far as possible, consultations are held between the President of the Senate and the Speaker of this Chamber, with a view to arriving at agreements as to what shall be a basis for each House. But if there should be a difference of opinion between the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate in regard to such matters—and there may not be, and frequently is not, unanimity—difficulties immediately arise.

The CHAIRMAN (Hon. J. M. Chanter).—I would remind the honorable member that his time has expired.

Dr. MALONEY (Melbourne) [3.53].—In regard to the non-hearing of the division bells upon Friday afternoon last by the honorable member for Dampier (Mr. Gregory), I think it is up to me to acknowledge that he is hard of hearing. I hope that he will excuse me making the information public, but as a medical man I have not failed to observe this fact repeatedly in this chamber. That, I think, will dispose of the matter altogether.

Upon the present occasion, I shall not trespass unduly upon the time of honorable members, because I spoke upon this question on Friday last. If my information be correct—that the employees of this Parliament are grouped into five separate Departments—the position is a ridiculous one. There are five Departments, I am informed, to control some seventy-five officials—that is one Department for each fifteen employees. There is an old Eastern adage which is very true, and of which I am reminded at present. It is that "That officer rises quickly to eminence who basks in the sunshine of the presence of his superiors." In other words, the man who is always under the eye of his superior officer has a better chance of rising in his profession or calling than has the man who is never seen by the head of his Department. The system which at present obtains in this House must, in justice to our officers, be altered. It is ridiculous that men who are sent here as representatives of the people should be asked to act upon Committees when those Committees can only play a fool's game. I speak more particularly on behalf of the Library Committee. If matters relating to the powers of that Committee are not settled in a

more sensible way, either by means of a resolution of this House, or by the passing of legislation dealing with them, and if my colleagues will resign from that Committee as a protest, I shall certainly resign with them.

At this point I desire to make it perfectly clear that I have nothing but respect and regard for the actions of Mr. Speaker in reference to the Committees of this Chamber. I wish that I could say the same in regard to another gentleman to whom I alluded on Friday last. Subsection 3 of section 14 of the Public Service Act provides—

The officers of the Senate, the officers of the House of Representatives, the officers of the Parliament Library, the officers of the Parliamentary Reporting Staff, and the officers of the Joint House Committee shall be deemed to constitute separate Departments under this Act.

My information, therefore, that the employees of the Commonwealth Parliament are grouped under five separate Departments is strictly accurate. I am not quite sure of the number of officers who are employed in the building, but, from a perusal of the Estimates, I gather that the total is seventy-five. Is it not the acme of folly that there should be five separate Departments to control seventy-five officers of this Parliament? There must be some way out of this condition of affairs. It was never intended by this democratic Parliament—for, with all its faults, it is a democratic Parliament—that one gentleman, if he so desired, should have the power to block everything.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—It is a *Comedy of Errors*.

Dr. MALONEY.—Bad laws, if administered by good men, may be much better than good laws badly administered by men who are not honorable. I understand that grave dissatisfaction is being experienced by every Committee appointed by this Chamber. That dissatisfaction has now reached such a point that if something be not done, and done quickly, to remedy the existing condition of affairs, these Committees will resign as a protest. If my colleagues upon the Library Committee resign their positions I shall feel it my duty to resign with them.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Mr. Speaker will feel very much annoyed if the honorable

member resigns from the Library Committee, because he is chairman of that body.

Dr. MALONEY.—I have nothing but respect for the actions of Mr. Speaker in regard to every matter which has been brought before any Parliamentary Committee with which I have been associated.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—The honorable member objects to being a rubber stamp?

Dr. MALONEY.—Yes; but not a rubber stamp because of any desire on the part of Mr. Speaker, but only because of a desire on the part of a certain gentleman who shall remain unnamed.

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I should be very sorry to lose the companionship of the honorable member under any circumstances.

Dr. MALONEY.—I thank the honorable member for his flattering reference. I voiced my protest upon this matter very strongly on Friday last, and I shall not delay honorable members by referring to it at greater length now. I have nothing but contempt for the practice which is at present followed in regard to the powers of our Parliamentary Committees. This is not the first Library Committee of which I have been a member. In the State Parliament of Victoria the President of the Legislative Council and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly always carried out their duties in a gentlemanly and humane way. I have had some experience on our Library Committee, and I can say that it has never arrived at such an *impasse* as at the present time. If any honorable member feels it his duty, by way of Bill or otherwise, to propose that the House Committee shall act, first with Mr. Speaker, and then with Mr. President, I shall gladly support him. I understand that certain action is being taken in another place, and I commend that as a good example to follow.

Mr. WATKINS (Newcastle) [4.1].—The position of the various Committees of this House is by no means satisfactory. Certain honorable gentlemen are appointed to these Committees in Parliament after Parliament, and yet they have practically no voice in the control of the employees, or in other affairs of the House. All that these Committees are asked to do, apparently, is to approve of some expenditure or action by others. This Parliament creates and provides for the

payment of the Public Service Commissioner, and yet to-day, according to the statement of the honorable member for Lang (Sir Elliot Johnson) we cannot control the few employees about the premises; who are left to the whims of others. It is time that Committees were either abolished or given the power to act as they think best. Surely this supreme Parliament, as we claim it to be, ought to be able to manage the few servants in this building. In a little trouble which occurred a while ago, all the correspondence which passed, I take it, from the President or the Chairman of the House Committee, was signed by the Secretary as on behalf of the Joint House Committee. To this I distinctly object, for we, as a Committee, knew nothing about the matter. There has been only one meeting of the Joint House Committee since the beginning of this Parliament.

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—And then the prices of food in the refreshment room were raised.

Mr. WATKINS.—Which we were simply asked to approve. The whole position is farcical, and unless some change is made, and the position altered, although I have been on various Committees during the last twenty years, I shall positively refuse to act in the future.

Mr. CONSIDINE (Barrier) [4.5].—I have no desire to reflect on the honorable gentleman who occupies the position of Mr. Speaker, but, in my opinion, the members of this Chamber should, through their delegates on the Committees, have some say as to the wages and conditions of those who attend to our wants here. It is an invidious position in which honorable members find themselves in this regard. If an injustice is being done to any person who assists us with our correspondence, or attends upon us in any other way, we ought to be able to exercise some control through the House Committee. The honorable member for Lang (Sir Elliot Johnson), in his explanation to-day—though whether intentionally or inadvertently I do not know—said that one of the workers in receipt of £182 per annum, or something less, I think, than £3 10s. per week, is able to supplement his income by attending to honorable members' baggage, and so forth. I hope that neither Mr. Speaker nor the President

of the Senate is prepared to make that a basis for fixing the wages of the employees of this Parliament—that there shall not be taken into account any gratuities they may receive for services rendered to honorable members.

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I was not making any reference to that matter at all, but to actual payments made to the cleaner out of the Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. WATKINS.—Instead of increasing salaries, bonuses are given.

Mr. CONSIDINE. — I know; but the honorable member for Lang mentioned that this employee had means of supplementing his salary.

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I said that he was paid, in addition, for certain services.

Mr. CONSIDINE. — Nevertheless the impression was left on my mind that besides his salary he received certain gratuities from honorable members for doing, I suppose, the work he is paid his salary to do.

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I think the honorable member has entirely misunderstood both my intention and my statement. I had no such idea in my mind at all.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—However, that may be, the salary paid to this employee is by no means adequate, for, as I say, it means less than £3 10s. a week.

Mr. BELL.—It is a shade over £3 10s. a week.

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—It is not too much—in my opinion, it is not sufficient.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—We, taking advantage of the fact that we can raise our own salaries, have voted ourselves £1,000 a year, and certainly those employees who have to face the same difficulties as ourselves in rearing and maintaining their families, but in an accentuated form, should be given adequate remuneration.

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—This case is before me at the present time, with a view to further increasing the salary.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—It is certainly a matter to which honorable members might very well devote their attention. I join with other honorable members in disclaiming any desire to reflect upon Mr. Speaker or anybody else who may have charge of these matters. I claim

as an honorable member of this House, that this is our responsibility.

Mr. MATHEWS.—I do not think it is. I do not think we could alter the position if we tried.

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—Only by altering the Public Service Act.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Mr. Speaker and Mr. President could sell this establishment to-morrow if they wanted to, and nobody could make any charge against them.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—As I understand the position, our employees are not under the Public Service Act, and, therefore, have not the privilege of approaching the Arbitration Court with the statement of their grievances.

Mr. MATHEWS.—They are controlled under the provisions of the Public Service Act.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—But Mr. Speaker has distinctly stated that the Presiding Officer of each House has full statutory authority over employees of the Parliament.

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—In respect of salaries, appointments, and promotions.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—Then the Arbitration Court is not available to them?

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—Yes, in regard to general matters, in the same way as it is available to others in the Public Service.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—But not with regard to salaries?

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—No.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—Well, that is the point I wanted to get at.

Mr. WATKINS.—In a point that was raised a little while ago, the Presiding Officers pointed out that, under section 14 of the Public Service Act, certain things ought to be done.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—What I am concerned about is that the Speaker has told us that he and the President of the Senate take full responsibility for all increases in salaries, and alterations in working conditions, and matters of that kind. That means that the employees of Parliament have not the same privileges as outside workers, for they cannot approach the Arbitration Court and state a case for increase of salaries or redress of any other grievances. Neither are they paid overtime, although I suppose they get other privi-

leges with regard to holidays. On the other hand, they have to remain here as long as the House is sitting. If we decide upon an all-night sitting, they have to be in attendance, and get no extra payment. No matter how good the working conditions may be, the employees of the Parliament are put to the same expenditure as are other employees of the Public Service, and they are not paid anything like an adequate wage under the present conditions of living. It is all right for us. We have looked after ourselves.

Mr. MATHEWS.—You are as bad as Prowse and Gabb. You are always talking about the "salary grab."

Mr. CONSIDINE.—No; because I thought that that was a most statesman-like act on the part of honorable members. It is the newspapers that refer to it as the "salary grab." The honorable member knows quite well that I never had any doubts on that question, and I have never heard of any discontent among the people I represent concerning the increase we voted in our own salaries; but I said at the time that I hoped the lesson would not be lost upon the workers outside. It is the duty of those who claim to represent the working class, as a class, to insist that those who wait upon us and attend to our wants get at least decent living conditions and decent wages, especially as we took such good care to get well ahead ourselves of any increase in the cost of living.

Mr. MATHEWS (Melbourne Ports) [4.15]—I want to say a few words upon this matter, because I am a member of the House Committee. The question that has been raised will have to be dealt with at some time or other. I have been a member of the House Committee for six or eight years, and I doubt very much whether the Committee has any power whatever. We may talk as much as we like. As a matter of fact, to all intents and purposes this building and everything associated with it belongs to the President and Mr. Speaker. It is idle for honorable members to laugh. This Parliament has no power over the matter. If it had, is it likely that the present condition of affairs would have been allowed to go on for so long? If we have power to do anything, it is time the Government formulated a scheme to deal

with the whole of the Joint Committees in an effective manner. I got into terrible trouble once for advocating that an official on this side should get the same pay as an official on the Senate side. The other day a man started as a cleaner over there at £202 a year. It is not a penny too much, but on the House of Representatives' side he would get only £182 a year. I want to know the reason for this difference. A cleaner on this side would not do less work. As a matter of fact, he would do more, because there are more members to create work, and yet he would get £20 less. We have two returned soldiers on this side; they have been here for twelve months, are working efficiently, and yet they are getting £20 a year less than the man on the Senate side. This position should not be tolerated, yet it is. The honorable member for Melbourne (Dr. Maloney) made some flattering references to his majesty the Speaker. All I can say is that I never can get a meeting of the House Committee on this side.

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—That is not because members have not been summoned, but because they do not attend.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Well, I do not remember one.

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—We have not been able to get a quorum. I have waited ten and sometimes fifteen minutes for a quorum.

Mr. MATHEWS.—I have never had a notice summoning me to a meeting. The Joint House Committee deals with certain matters affecting both Houses, but so far as this side is concerned, I understood it was comprised of members of this House, and if so I have never been summoned to one meeting.

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—Members are summoned as members of the Joint House Committee.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Has the Joint House Committee authority to deal with matters affecting the House of Representatives?

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—Yes; both Houses.

Mr. MATHEWS.—I have never yet known a question to be decided by this Committee. The moment I have tried to get matters affecting this side dealt with, our Czar has said, "We cannot deal with that here; you must refer it to the Czar on the other side." I listened very attentively to what the honorable member

for Lang (Sir Elliot Johnson) said in reference to the request put forward on the other side of this building, that any increase given to the House of Representatives' attendants should also apply to Senate attendants, but I contend that a man who is working on this side has an equal right to receive whatever increased rate of wage is paid to a cleaner on the other side of the building. I want to know how the difficulty can be obviated.

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I would also like to know.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Does the honorable member admit that he does not know how it can be obviated?

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—It can be obviated by placing the parliamentary attendants under the Public Service Act, so that they can have their wages and conditions settled by a proper tribunal.

Mr. MATHEWS.—But, does the honorable member know how to obviate the difficulty under the existing system?

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—No.

Mr. MATHEWS.—If that is so, the sooner arrangements are made by which it can be obviated the better it will be for the servants of this House. I am not too keen on placing them under the Public Service Commissioner. They suffer many injustices now, but I think they would suffer still more under him. Certainly their grievances can be ventilated now, but under the Public Service Commissioner they would have very little opportunity of bringing them under the notice of honorable members. We ought not to tolerate a system which will give one man more pay than another who is doing the same class of work, particularly when the increased wage is given to a new servant who has yet to learn his duties. Is it fair that a cleaner on the Senate side, who started work a fortnight ago, should get £20 a year more than is paid to cleaners on this side of the building who have been in their positions for two years?

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I am inclined to think that the honorable member has been misinformed, and that the servant he refers to is employed in the capacity of messenger.

Mr. MATHEWS.—The cleaners on the other side of the building are called messengers.

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—They are messengers who also do the work of cleaners. On this side of the building the messengers do the work of messengers only, and are not called upon to do cleaners' work.

Mr. MATHEWS.—I am not asking that the wages of the other man should be reduced, but that the pay of the cleaners on this side of the building should be increased and brought into line with the wages paid on the Senate side.

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—If we increase the pay of the cleaners all the other men above them will naturally ask for increases, and the question of seniority will crop up at once.

Mr. MATHEWS.—That is quite possible; but we can deal with that difficulty when we reach it.

Sir ELLIOT JOHNSON.—I am dealing with it every day.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Surely this matter has been sufficiently well ventilated.

Mr. MATHEWS.—This question is always cropping up. It is annoying to a member of the House Committee to be asked why certain things are not done when the members of that Committee know that they are powerless to do anything. Nothing is more productive of disruption than the unfair treatment of one section of employees. Recently, when a Judge of the Supreme Court of Victoria was overlooked in the matter of the appointment of the Chief Justice of the State he made the remark that an injustice of that sort would make a man say, "I will do just my bare work, and that only." I do not blame men for doing just their bare work when they find that others who are doing the same class of work are getting better pay. It is the responsibility of the Government to bring in a comprehensive scheme for the management of all those associated with this building; otherwise honorable members will be constantly bringing forward matters which ought not to occupy our time when we have so many other important questions to consider.

Proposed vote agreed to.

DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER.

Divisions 13 to 14, £304,452.

Dr. EARLE PAGE (Cowper) [4.29].—Last week we heard several honorable members express the desire to strike out certain items in this expenditure when

the Committee came to deal with the Estimates in detail. Although they were not willing to reduce the total vote, they assured us that the items of expenditure would be dealt with very severely. Honorable members should be given an opportunity of proving that what they said last week was not cant and humbug, and of making their position clear to their constituents by showing that they are really in earnest in this matter. It is the desire of quite a number of honorable members to exercise some control over the various spending Departments of the Commonwealth. We were assured last week that the matter of reducing expenditure and dealing with the items in detail was not a party matter, and that every honorable member would be able to vote according to his convictions. The history of the Prime Minister's Department is worthy of some detailed consideration. It was established eight years ago, when the present High Commissioner was Prime Minister, and at that time the total sum provided on the Estimates was £11,795. Nearly all the members of the present Government strongly objected to the formation of that Department, and pointed out that other sub-Departments would come into existence. It was also stated that these sub-Departments could be better handled by some other Minister. Despite the fact of these protests we find that year after year the expenditure is continually growing. If the expenditure was necessary, one would not complain; but we have to consider whether the various activities which are conducted by the Prime Minister's Department should not be placed under different control, and where they rightly belong. During recent years the Department has been dealing with sugar, wool, wheat, shipping, the administration of Papua, mining, and price-fixing. All these branches of governmental activity have been dealt with by the Prime Minister's Department, and the continuance of this has brought about a state of affairs which does not permit the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) to efficiently and expeditiously supervise and control the proper work of his own Department. The Prime Minister's Department should be for the purpose of co-ordinating the work of the various

Departments, keeping in touch with State Governments throughout the Commonwealth, and with the Imperial Government on questions of Imperial policy. Since I have been a member of this Parliament I have often wondered why the question of sugar, for instance, could not be controlled by the Department of Trade and Customs, where it really belongs. The Minister in charge of that Department is thoroughly *au fait* with the whole question of sugar. He has two mills in his own electorate, and a considerable number of cane-growers have supported him for quite a number of years. Probably nowhere in the Commonwealth could we find any one more capable of dealing with the question of sugar in its various aspects than the Minister for Trade and Customs (Mr. Greene). At present only a portion of the work is handled by that Minister, while the bulk of it is controlled by the Prime Minister's Department. The same may be said in regard to the embargo on the export of sheepskins. The practice adopted in the past may have been necessary during the war period, because certain negotiations with the Imperial Government, particularly in regard to wholesale purchases, were necessary. But the war has been over for nearly two years, and it is now time such commercial activities should be handled by the proper Department. A month or six weeks ago, a conference of all those associated with the export of sheepskins was called by the Prime Minister, at which the Minister for Trade and Customs was not present.

MR. CONSIDINE.—Does the Prime Minister not control every Department?

DR. EARLE PAGE.—I am merely endeavouring to show that, irrespective of what ability a man may possess, it is impossible for him to have a grip of the different subjects in every detail. By a flash of intuition possibly a right decision is sometimes arrived at, but frequently the wrong procedure is adopted. The same may be said concerning wheat, which is a question that is to form the subject of a censure motion to-morrow. These are ordinary commercial activities, and if the work had been undertaken by a Department that was not overloaded with responsibility we might have had a more satisfactory settlement before to-

day. During the war period it may have been necessary for the Government to exercise certain control over metals, but now the war is over this question should be dealt with by the proper Minister. According to the information before us, the Prime Minister's Department handles also the question of shipping and mail services to the Pacific Islands, Commonwealth shipbuilding, Commonwealth Government Line of Steamers, Commonwealth Shipping Board, and the Port Pirie wharf. A few moments' reflection will show that questions such as these could be more profitably dealt with by another Department, where the officers are not dealing with the relations between the various Governments, but with work such as questions like these entail, and where trained administrative staffs are in existence to deal with these matters. In connexion with shipbuilding and the Commonwealth Government Line of Steamers, we have to consider whether the Minister for the Navy (Mr. Laird Smith) and the Minister for Home and Territories (Mr. Poynton) could not handle the work more expeditiously and efficiently. The matter of providing is one item alone in which single control by one authority could secure great savings. There is also the question of handling dock-yards and standardizing the whole of the requirements in connexion with the construction and handling of ships. Surely this work could be more expeditiously carried out by officers intimately associated with the business.

MR. BLUNDELL. — What money would be saved if a transfer were made?

DR. EARLE PAGE.—We could save a great deal. In connexion with shipbuilding and other activities of the Government, we find draughtsmen mentioned over and over again under different headings. Mr. Allard's report on the Public Service of New South Wales shows what may happen under the system that I am criticising. He mentions, among other things, that a firm bought boilers from one Department of the Service at £540 each and sold them to another Department for £750 each, although the officials of each Department should have known what was being done, because tenders were publicly called for.

Many of the officials who are now under the Prime Minister should be transferred to the Departments of the Navy or of Home and Territories. That would certainly allow a reduction of staff, and would give an opportunity for other economies in the saving of stocks, more efficient storekeeping, and the standardization which it would make possible. The Commonwealth Government line of steam-ships must be supplied with coal and oil, and so must our war ships; and, unquestionably, supplies could be best arranged for and managed by one set of officials acting both for our Navy and for our mercantile marine. We shall never have a properly equipped Navy unless our mercantile marine is worked in connexion with, and as an adjunct to, it.

Mr. BLUNDELL.—If the transference of officers which you advocate were made, how much would be saved, and what officials would be dismissed?

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—If not a man were dismissed, considerable saving could still be effected by reducing the stocks which it would be necessary to carry, in having supplies always to hand, and by standardization. Mr. Allard's report shows that there is no reason why Government Departments, which now use a variety of patterns and types of machines, should not standardize their requirements, and then buy in greater bulk and at a lower rate.

Mr. POYNTON.—The honorable member loses sight of the fact that the Supply and Tender Board has been appointed.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—I shall deal with that when we come to the Treasury Estimates. The Board should do good service, but I notice that this year only £1,530 is to be spent on it, whereas last year £11,950 was spent.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—I thought that the honorable member belonged to the Economy party.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—Yes; but the economy which I desire does not mean the mere sacking of men; it means the proper marshalling and management of the resources of the country. Sir Arnold Gridley, who during the war was Controller of Electrical Power in Great Britain, is now visiting Australia. He was able by standardization, grouping,

and proper management to generate with £800 worth of coal 2,000,000,000 units of electricity, by utilizing materials that would otherwise have been wasted. It is estimated that in Great Britain a saving of something like £100,000,000 can be effected by the substitution of sixteen power-stations for over 600 which were used during the war. We should be able to effect similar economies here. No one man can properly conduct all the activities with which the Prime Minister is now charged, and it will be of great advantage to the Commonwealth for business which properly belongs to other Departments to be transferred to those Departments.

Because the Prime Minister is continually mixed up with matters that are not properly under his administration, the business of his Department is not being expeditiously performed. Some three months ago I asked in this House whether Australia would be represented at the Pan-Pacific Scientific Conference which was to be held at Honolulu in about three weeks' time, and was informed that the matter was to be considered, although any representative that might be appointed should then have been *en route* to Honolulu. The New South Wales and Queensland representatives at that Conference have returned; but I have not heard of an Australian representative. The importance of the Conference was admitted by British, American, and Australian newspapers, and no country has a greater length of coastline washed by the waters of the Pacific than has Australia. We were not represented at the Conference because the Prime Minister was too much engrossed with other work.

Mr. CONSIDINE.—He was too busy to go himself.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—It was not a Conference for the Prime Minister to attend.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—It was not necessary for the Prime Minister to go; but an invitation was sent to his Department, and Australia should have been represented.

Mr. POYNTON.—Had we sent a representative, it would have been said that he had gone away on a picnic.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—That would not have been my complaint.

The pressure of work upon the Prime Minister prevents him from attending promptly to his duties as Attorney-General. I am desirous of ascertaining whether, in the view of the Attorney-General, a rifle range at Coff's Harbour may be used on Sundays; but during a period of seven months I have not been able to get any definite statement.

The Dominions Royal Commission made certain proposals regarding forestry. The Western Australian Government sent a representative to the Imperial Forestry Conference, which has just concluded its sittings, but the Commonwealth did not send one.

Mr. GREENE.—We made an arrangement with the States whereby their representatives should represent the Commonwealth also, we sharing with them in the expense.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—I am glad to hear that.

What has been done in regard to the proper tabulation of the natural resources of the Commonwealth in accordance with the request of the Imperial Government that there should be such a tabulation in respect of each of the Dominions? Nothing at all.

Recently I asked a question concerning the manufacture of aluminium, but because the Prime Minister's Department was so busy with matters that do not properly belong to it, the reply was given that little or no electricity is needed for the manufacture of aluminium. I had understood from the Minister for Trade and Customs that if we could find good deposits of aluminium ore, the Defence Department would carry out a big hydro-electric proposition at the Clarence Gorge. According to the Chief Electrical Engineer of the New South Wales Public Works Department, the statement that the quantity of electrical power required in the production of aluminium is relatively small is incorrect. Writing to me, he says—

The first aluminium works that I visited were at Kinlochleven, in Scotland, where 50,000 horse-power is developed, and where they turn out anything from 8,000 to 10,000 tons of aluminium per annum, the power required being at the rate of a little over 5 horse-power per ton per annum. Greater power is used in other works in Germany, Sweden, and America.

The standard authority on this subject says—

Various electrolytic processes must be mentioned which have resulted in the cheap production of certain metals which can be made by other means only at great expense. The classical example is the electrolytic production of aluminium, which is now certainly the most important electro-chemical industry. In the processes of Hare and Heroult, the electrolyte is a fused solution of alumina (as solute) in the double fluoride of aluminium sodium (as solvent). Carbon anodes are used, while the melted aluminium metal in the bottom of the pot forms the cathode. The temperature is 900 C. The alumina is decomposed by the current, and fresh alumina is added at intervals to the bath. According to J. W. Richards, the production of 1 kg. of aluminium requires 22 K.W.M.

To test the feeling of the Committee regarding the transfer of these officers to the branches or the Departments to which they properly belong, I move—

That the vote be reduced by £1.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER (Wakefield) [4.48].—Incidental reference has very frequently been made to the High Commissioner's Office during the past three or four months, and I have more than once voiced the complaint of visitors who have spent a considerable time in the Old Country and have been exceedingly disappointed by the failure of officials at Australia House to give them the assistance which they looked for. Australia House is reported to be anything but an attractive and useful centre working in the interests of the Commonwealth. The reports I have heard have not been prejudiced, but have been very sincere statements of regret that Australia House to-day is not answering the purpose for which it was intended, and is not justifying the enormous expenditure incurred in its construction and administration. I have heard these reports from soldiers whose political sympathies are with honorable members opposite, as well as from soldiers whose sympathies are with honorable members on this side of the House. They are unanimous in the complaint that there is a deplorable lack of energy and enterprise in the direction of usefully advertising this country. That ought not to be. I have a very shrewd suspicion that the Government know, and have known for a long time, that this condition of affairs exists. If so, the Committee ought to know where the weakness lies, and the trouble should be remedied

at the earliest moment. It has been said that only a very small proportion of the employees in the High Commissioner's Office have any knowledge of Australia, of Australian products, and of trade possibilities with the Old Country. That ought not to be. There ought to be a substantial representation of Australia in the High Commissioner's Office. There should be stationed there officers with a complete knowledge of Australia. There should be specialists who know something of Australia's possibilities and productive wealth, and who by their very presence would help to advertise Australia from a trade point of view. I am told that such officers are not to be found in Australia House. A constant supply of fresh men from Australia should be sent there. Officers should be sent Home for a few years and then replaced by men equipped with a thoroughly up-to-date knowledge of Australia. The Treasurer (Sir Joseph Cook) only last week promised that, if desired, particulars would be given in regard to every item in the Estimates, and I want detailed information about the expenditure on Australia House.

Mr. GABB.—I call attention to the want of a quorum. [*Quorum formed.*]

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—What proportion of the staff at Australia House consists of men who went there from Australia? What proportion has been picked up in the Old Country? How long have they held their positions, and what are their conditions of employment? Are they employed permanently or temporarily? I desire to know whether the staff of that section of Australia House whose present duty it is to look after Australian interests and the disposal of Australian products, consists of men who are familiar with our producing conditions and have a thorough knowledge of the products that we desire to put in increasing quantities on the Home market. I should be glad if the Treasurer would also give us a statement showing the number of employees in Australia House, and their distribution in regard to different interests. Is it proposed to attach to the staff officers whose duty it will be to develop our trading conditions? I do not think there is a special section attending to trading interests, and, if that be so, I desire to know whether there is any attempt to utilize the staff of Australia House in co-

operation with the Agents-General, so as to promote Australian interests. Will the Treasurer also tell us whether Australia House is fully occupied? Are those portions of it which are not required for the purposes of the High Commissioner fully leased so that there is no dead weight attaching to it?

I desire now to refer to the division "Australian Commissioner in United States of America, £10,890." Will the Treasurer tell the Committee whether this enterprise, so far as it has gone, has shown any sign of justifying the expenditure upon it, and whether it is intended to appoint in addition to the Trade Commissioner a High Commissioner in the United States? Will the Treasurer inform the Committee what information the Government have up to date in regard to the success of the Trade Commissioner there, and whether there is any promise of greater success in the future? The United States of America is a vast country, and I do not think we are likely to have any practical results from the appointment of one man to represent us there. I am not opposed to expenditure in these directions if there is a possibility of a return, but if these offices are being established from a trade point of view it seems to me that, instead of having one man located in one centre, we must have a dozen men to cover the different areas.

The next matter to which I desire to refer relates to Commonwealth shipbuilding. Having regard to the careful husbanding of the finances, this is a subject on which the Committee should have some information. In the matter of construction, judging by the reports submitted to us, some really good work has been done. In the past, for special reasons, the cost of construction, relatively, has been satisfactory. One reason, I believe, is the fact that the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes), very wisely, secured an understanding—and it seems to have been effective—with the trade unions involved that certain conditions should be observed during the currency of certain contracts for ship construction. For a time the resultant costs of construction per ton as compared with costs in other parts of the world were eminently satisfactory, but the Committee ought to know

whether that satisfactory condition obtains to-day.

MR. RILEY.—The Government have stopped shipbuilding operations.

MR. RICHARD FOSTER.—If what I have heard is true, I am very glad that they have. The Prime Minister sought a renewal of those conditions, and I believe he has said that without a renewal he would not proceed. I hope he will stand to that. We have no opportunity to form an opinion simply by a quotation of estimates, because we do not know the class of ship and the class of work involved in respect of certain estimates that have been published. It may vary extensively, involving an additional cost of 20, 30, or 40 per cent., according to the type of ship, so that quoting to-day a certain price for dead-weight tonnage construction and another tender to-morrow, we cannot possibly form any idea as to whether the latter is a satisfactory tender unless we know all the conditions of the varying kind of ship that is to be constructed. I hope the Treasurer will note that point; but, apart from that, the cost of construction in the Old Country and in other countries has receded very considerably in the last few months, and if we are not going to get on even terms, or as nearly as possible on even terms, in regard to cost of construction, we ought to call a halt. Take the position of Inter-State shipping in Australia. If Inter-State shipping in Australia were left to the Inter-State shipping companies, the people would be in a pretty bad position, because they have not the tonnage to deal with more than three-fourths of the trade under present conditions. The reason why the Inter-State shipping companies are not restoring pre-war tonnage is that they are business men, and know that it will pay them infinitely better to wait until shipbuilding costs recede very considerably than to build at the present high-water mark of costs. Subsequent events have proved that, even to-day, they can buy tonnage at a very big percentage less than they can construct.

MR. RILEY.—Yes; but old ships.

MR. RICHARD FOSTER.—Not old ships, either.

MR. POYNTON.—Yes.

MR. RICHARD FOSTER.—The Minister must know that the cost of shipbuilding at Home and in America is a good deal less than it was six months ago.

MR. POYNTON.—The Broken Hill Proprietary Company are asking us to build three ships for them now.

MR. RICHARD FOSTER.—Then, will the Minister let us know what the position really is?

MR. MAXWELL.—Has the cost of construction receded at Home?

MR. RICHARD FOSTER.—The papers say it has.

MR. RILEY.—Wages have not gone down, and material has not gone down.

MR. RICHARD FOSTER.—In the shipping notes it is reported again and again that the cost of construction has gone down considerably, and that it is still expected to fall.

MR. POYNTON.—Recently we had an offer to build a ship of a particular type, and I cabled to Mr. Larkin, in England, giving him particulars, to find what price that ship could be built for there. The price quoted to him came out considerably higher than the price quoted here.

MR. RICHARD FOSTER.—Then, will the Minister explain why the shipping companies in Australia, wealthy companies, companies that have the money, do not build ships to replace those they have sold?

MR. RILEY.—Because they cannot get the plant and machinery.

MR. RICHARD FOSTER.—That is not the reason. The reason is that they will not risk it.

MR. GABB.—I call attention to the state of the Committee. [*Quorum formed.*]

MR. RICHARD FOSTER.—Australian ship-owners do not, or will not, involve themselves in the cost of supplying tonnage up to pre-war figures, because they know it will pay them handsomely to wait until the cost of shipbuilding goes down. The Minister infers that it has not gone down yet. At any rate, it is expected to come down, and it is the biggest certainty in the world that it will come down, as everything else will.

MR. McWILLIAMS.—The price of ships has come down.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER. — Yes; but it is difficult to buy new ships. Australian ship-owners know their business, and have refrained from building ships, which they want badly, because they could not run the Inter-State shipping if it were not for the Commonwealth withdrawing its oversea vessels to assist the Inter-State shipping. That is the position to-day. It is putting the Commonwealth in a very awkward position for the future. If they are waiting, and the Commonwealth withdraws its oversea vessels, which have been making a lot of money, and puts them into a trade where they will barely pay expenses of running—

Mr. RILEY.—That is an argument for building more ships.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—But who is to do it?

Mr. RILEY.—The Commonwealth.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER. — And why should not the ship-owners, who have the Inter-State trade in their hands?

Mr. RILEY.—Because they have not the same interest in the country that the Government have.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—The point I emphasize is that if the Commonwealth does it when nobody else will, then, when normal conditions come, the Commonwealth will have to compete at a very great disadvantage. Incidentally the reduced profits of Commonwealth shipping are, to some extent, the result of the Commonwealth having to withdraw its ships from oversea work, and from the big profits they were making, in order to come and assist the Inter-State trade. I wish the Government to tell us their policy in this regard, and to state whether they are justified, on the very top of the market, when everybody knows that there is going to be a slump in every industry, in going on with ship construction, particularly if the industrial unions will not give a fair deal. If they do not, I hope the Prime Minister will keep the promise he has made to the House two or three times, and that he will not build another ship until they do.

Mr. ATKINSON (Wilmot) [5.20].—The Prime Minister's Department seems to be one of those which grow with lightning rapidity. People often say that if the Government start a Department it will become a huge affair in a very little

time. This Department started in a small way eight or nine years ago, and has certainly developed to very large dimensions. No doubt the war had a good deal to do with its rapid extension. I cannot see much use for it. I doubt if it ought ever to have existed. I see nothing that it did throughout the war that could not have been just as well done by other Departments, with the addition of proper experts, at the time.

Mr. GREGORY.—It ought not to be a regular administrative Department.

Mr. ATKINSON.—It ought not. There is, strictly speaking, no portfolio of Prime Minister. The Department was started by Mr. Fisher, and there was really no reason for its creation. Strictly, it ought not to be there. However, it is there, and I should like to know from the Treasurer whether it is to be reduced. Now that the war is over, are many of its activities and many of the matters with which it deals now, and which, more or less, fit themselves properly into other Departments, to be taken away from it, or done away with altogether? Is the Prime Minister's Department to be cut down to a small affair again? Last year the vote was £199,000, and the expenditure £309,000. This year the vote is £304,000, and if the expenditure is to exceed the vote in the same proportion it will reach £500,000 before the twelve months are out. Now that the war is over, there is no need to extend the Department. It ought to be contracted, and, if it does contract, the staff ought to be reduced. I suppose the present staff are all members of the Public Service, and, if work cannot be found for them in the Prime Minister's Department, they will have to be farmed out somewhere else. That is all right, but, when their term is up, there will be no need to appoint successors to them, whereas, if the Department continues in its present form it must grow. It will expand, but, if it were not there, the Commonwealth would be doing just as much effective work through the other Departments. If it remains, it will be carrying a lot of people who are quite unnecessary. It has been stated, by interjection to-day, that if we did away with the Department we should not save anything. I think we should save a good deal, for, if it were not for the Department being in existence to-day, all the work would be done with very much fewer hands

through the other Departments. There would not be the same circumlocution and duplication in many ways, and we should certainly save a good deal of administrative expense.

An item of £13,000 appears for the "upkeep of Australia House." Last year the vote was £9,000 and the expenditure £12,600 odd. What is exactly involved in the upkeep of that establishment? Surely it has got into its stride? One would think that the cost of upkeep would not be on the increase. Last year £320 was estimated for rent, and the expenditure amounted £1,535. For the current year the Estimate is £450. I should like to know what that item represents. Why is the salary of the Secretary to the Prime Minister's Department to be advanced to £1,250 when the salaries of other departmental heads are increased only to £1,000 or £1,100?

Mr. BRUCE.—That was dealt with in the recommendations of Mr. Gibson.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—He recommended a salary of £1,250 for that position, and for some of the other positions he recommended higher amounts than the Government have actually placed on the Estimates. For instance, he recommended that the Secretary to the Treasury should commence at £1,500 and advance to £2,000.

Mr. ATKINSON.—I had forgotten that recommendation. At any rate, I ask the Treasurer to let the Committee know whether some contraction in the Prime Minister's Department may be expected. At present it seems to be handling a number of activities that could be better controlled by other Departments.

Mr. BRUCE (Flinders) [5.28].—I, too, regret that the Prime Minister's Department is being taken as a whole.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—We can still deal with any item.

Mr. BRUCE.—I understand that one can move to reduce the total vote for the Department, but not any particular item.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Oh yes, you can.

Mr. BRUCE.—I am glad to hear that, because there are various items which call for explanation. The honorable member for Wilmot (Mr. Atkinson) referred to the fact that the vote for last year was £199,000, and the expenditure £309,000. That increase is so startling that it re-

quires some explanation, not only of the increase itself, but also of the extraordinary blunder that must have been made in estimating the expenditure of the Department. If in any ordinary commercial concern that was at all worried as to what its outgoings would be, the expenditure actually exceeded the estimate by 50 per cent., a crisis would be at hand. That increase in expenditure should be explained to the Committee. I do not credit the suggestion that we may get another 50 per cent. increase on the estimate for the current year. If that does happen the position will be disastrous, because the expenditure will then be in the vicinity of £450,000. I assume that the Pacific Islands will be administered by the Prime Minister's Department, and, having regard to the obligations we have undertaken in respect of them, the expenditure provided for on these Estimates is very small. The Committee should know exactly what is to be done in regard to those Possessions, and whether they are to be made self-supporting, and from their own revenue pay all administrative expenses, or whether the cost of their administration is to be met out of the revenue of the Commonwealth. The item for contingencies should be looked at carefully. Whilst it was estimated last year at £12,000 the actual expenditure was £18,000. If honorable members will take a careful survey of the Estimates they will notice that increased expenditure on contingencies is an unhappy habit that all Departments have developed. Invariably, the estimated amount is exceeded, and a further vote becomes necessary. Some word of warning ought to be uttered that these additional amounts will not be voted without full inquiry as to the responsibility for the original underestimate. This practice creates a suspicion that the Departments are trying to hoodwink Parliament by placing on the Estimates the minimum amount, and trusting to luck to get a further vote when the original estimate is exceeded. The item for the maintenance of motor cars, including wages and expenses of chauffeurs, should be explained. My experience has taught me that this is an item that one must watch, otherwise it will eat up a large sum of money. Last year, the House voted for this service £1,250, but the expenditure totalled £3,831, whilst the estimate for this year is £3,500. I, personally, have on my

shoulders responsibility for a garage containing between thirty and forty cars, and I know that, unless there is extraordinarily careful supervision, there is nothing that has the same power of eating up money as has a garage and all the accessories of motor cars. Amongst other items in regard to which we should have some information is the estimate for the Basic Wage Commission, which has already cost £11,494. A further expenditure of £10,000 is provided for on the Estimates. When we are spending money at that rate we ought to have some statement as to the progress that is being made, and the indications of whether or not a useful purpose is likely to be served. There is an item of £1,450 as a payment to the International Agricultural Institute at Rome. Is that recurring or non-recurring expenditure? It is hopeless for the Committee to try to deal with all the items in this Department. It is only possible to concentrate on a few which honorable members regard as hopelessly extravagant, and take a vote upon a proposal to reduce them. That is the only way in which we shall be able to do any good. For the travelling expenses of Commonwealth Ministers £1,000 is set down. Everybody will agree that Ministers should be recouped all expenses they incur while travelling on the business of the country.

Mr. GREGORY.—We want the Ministers to travel.

Mr. BRUCE.—Yes. This is a new item on the Estimates, but I think expenditure of this character should be considered on the basis of what is reasonable and useful. It is items of this kind, which, though small in themselves, in the aggregate inflate the Estimates to startling figures. The Audit Office shows an increase of £6,000 in the expenditure on salaries, but there is a compensating feature in a saving of £3,250 in respect of temporary assistance. Is there the same requirement for the services of the Audit Department as there was during the period of enormous war expenditure? Although the expenditure is reduced very little this year, it is mainly represented by large items rather than those detailed items that require the constant attention of an audit staff. I doubt whether the reduction that is shown is all that could

have been effected under existing circumstances. In the Governor-General's Department, £2,500 is set down for official telegrams and postage, although the expenditure last year was £4,207. Is that merely a recklessly optimistic estimate which we have no hope of realizing? Although the war is over, the relations between the Mother Country and Australia are daily becoming closer, and there are more matters of detail to be dealt with by letter and cable. Therefore, I doubt very much whether the reduction that is estimated will be effected. In connexion with the High Commissioner's Office there are numerous items to which I do not wish to refer in detail, but again there seems to be a rather optimistic estimate that temporary assistance and typists will cost only £1,000 this year as against an actual expenditure last year of £10,704. The estimate for last year was £4,500, which was exceeded by over £6,000. I should think that there must be this year a similar increase on the estimate. For advertising the resources of the Commonwealth, the estimated expenditure is £3,400, the same as the vote for last year. But surely advertising is an activity that will come under the control of the immigration authorities to a large extent when they are established?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Yes, and decreases in some of the other items are accounted for in the same way.

Mr. BRUCE.—I suggest that advertising is one service that certainly should be transferred to the immigration authorities. It is beyond the power of anybody to offer any suggestion in regard to Commonwealth shipbuilding and the Commonwealth Government line of steamers. Whilst it may be necessary for these items of expenditure to be included in the Estimates, they can convey nothing to any honorable member.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—On the whole, these activities cost nothing.

Mr. BRUCE.—The point I want to stress is that these expenditures are incurred, and that we should be in a position to receive the fullest information regarding the operations of all such ventures as the Commonwealth Shipping line or ship construction branch. I suggest that, unless something is done to

place before honorable members the full-est particulars, we shall have to take a more emphatic course. By requesting complete information, I do not mean information such as the type of detail generally supplied concerning Government industrial matters. In regard to the Commonwealth Woollen Mills, for example, we have been furnished with an infinity of detail which must have cost considerable money, time, and trouble to compile. Yet, all those details afforded no real information after one had laboured through the mass in search of what was wanted. All Government ventures should be treated as would be any private undertaking. That is to say, the persons responsible should furnish a balance-sheet showing the amount of capital put in by the Government, the assets held by the enterprise against that advance, and the profit and loss. We should be able to learn, at any time, what profit, if any, has actually been made by the venture in question during the financial period under review.

Mr. GREGORY. — I have extracted promises to that effect time and again, but they have never been carried out.

Mr. BRUCE.—The Government who will not regard such requests are heading for disaster. This year there has been put down a sum of £3,000,000 with which to construct ships. We would constitute a feeble Parliament if—after having agreed to that amount being lent to the Government shipbuilding venture—we failed to secure full information when the time came to consider where our money had gone, what had been done with it, and what amount of return we might reasonably look for.

Another matter requiring imperative consideration is, as to whether great enterprises, such as those to which I have been alluding, should continue to be controlled by one or two men. In all these concerns there are, at the most, but two minds, namely, that of the Minister and of the responsible head of the Department; and it remains with the Minister, in the last resort, to determine the whole question of policy in regard to a concern which is bigger than almost any private enterprise in Australia. What would be the conditions if these ventures were privately financed and controlled? Would any private enterprise care to place the matter of policy and of management in

the hands and at the mercy of one individual, so that success or failure would depend solely upon his brains, or lack of them? If we are to continue to run a Commonwealth line of vessels and a Commonwealth shipbuilding enterprise as an ordinary trading or commercial venture, there must be a change of control, so that our Commonwealth money shall not depend for its safekeeping and well-being upon the mind of one man more or less adequately equipped to hold such authority and responsibility.

Mr. GREGORY.—And this matter of shipbuilding and ship running should not remain in the Prime Minister's Department.

Mr. BRUCE.—It is a question whether all these enterprises should not be placed specifically under a kind of Government Commercial Venture Department. However, I fear that, if I were to advocate that, it would be taken rather as a confirmation of the policy itself, and I am not attracted by that prospect.

I desire to refer now to the position of the Australian Commissioner in America.

Mr. MAXWELL.—The Prime Minister promised the House a statement regarding his functions and status generally.

Mr. BRUCE.—I agree that we should be furnished with particulars defining, for example, the Commissioner's actual duties and responsibilities, and that we should be informed, also, how far successful or otherwise his activities have been. Opportunity should be given Parliament to consider the question of trade commissioners as a whole. To-day Australia is in a very fortunate position in that whatever she can offer the world in the line of primary produce is, generally, readily absorbed. Here, though, I should not forget to mention that we are now witnessing the turn of the tide with respect to our lower grade wool. Our fortunate position will not continue indefinitely. Let us consider our great commodity which has so stood by us, and is coming to our rescue more emphatically than ever, and which will be our salvation in the future. I refer to wheat. It is a matter of extraordinary good fortune that we should be in a position to dispose of our wheat, and obtain not merely a good, but a really high, price for it. I had considered that when the war was over it

would be almost impossible for us to dispose of our wheat. I had in mind the extremely high prices ruling, and the fact that more land than ever before would be put under wheat. This was actually occurring in the Argentine, and in Canada, and the United States of America. Even the cotton lands of the southern States, valuable as they were for cotton production, were being put under wheat because growers were attracted by the prices which would be available to them. I had considered, therefore—and so had very many others—that so soon as the war was over there would be an enormous re-emergence of wheat-growing. I had thought that practically the whole of Europe would be sown for wheat again, instead of which, however, we have witnessed the outbreak of more wars, and have learned of even less production than during the worst of the war years. The whole of Russia's supplies, for instance, have been cut off from the markets of the world, or the Russian fields have not been sown; but had Europe gone in for wheat-growing upon the enormous scale which was reasonably expected, we would not have been able to give our Australian wheat away overseas within a matter of eighteen months or two years from the termination of the war. That position, even now, is likely to arise some day; and we should not forget that, of all the wheat-producing countries, we are the furthest from the European market. It is imperative, therefore, that we should try to open up the East as the great source of disposal for our wheat. With China turning every day more and more from a rice-consuming to a wheat-consuming country, Australia has probably a better opportunity than any other part of the world to dispose of her wheat in the East. There, however, we have not been watching our interests. We have not appointed commissioners or agents; and, if we do not soon do so, then, despite the fact that we are the nearest wheat-producing country and the most readily able to furnish supplies, our chance will have been lost.

Mr. HAY.—It does not cost us any more to send our wheat to Great Britain than Western Canada.

Mr. Bruce.

Mr. BRUCE.—No; and there are parts of the Argentine which can ship at lower prices than we are able to do. But Canada is more able to reduce freightage in order to get her wheat to the coast than we are able to furnish ships to get our wheat out of Australia.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—When I was Minister for Agriculture in New South Wales, some twenty years ago, I made specific inquiries, and learned that our freights were only about the same as ruled in Canada.

Mr. BRUCE.—As the Minister says, that was a matter of twenty years ago. I travelled through Canada some seven years ago, and had the facts of the position pointed out to me. Then, again, there is the factor of the opening of the Panama Canal; that great work was not in existence at the time of the Minister's inquiries. However, I merely desire to raise the point at this appropriate opportunity, and to stress that we must consider the policy of furnishing Australian trade representatives, or commissioners, in the East. Even if it should involve additional expenditure, it is imperative that, in the near future, this question should be taken up.

I apologize for having gone into considerable detail upon specific items, but my purpose has been directed to pointing out the grave danger arising from careless underestimation. We should draw attention to some of the items, and utter a warning that we intend to look with a critical eye upon all suggestions that the Estimates be increased merely for the reason that, in the original furnishing of estimates, an underestimation was made. There is little reason or justification for underestimating. We should be able to look for some relief from this source by means of reduction rather than that we should have to consider increases solely because departmental officials have not provided a fair statement of estimated requirements.

Mr. RILEY (South Sydney) [5.50].—The salary for the Australian Commissioner in America is set down—I note—at £3,000 in one line of the Estimates, and, in another, an allowance of £2,000 is provided. There is a similar sum in different columns, with respect to the salary of his secretary, and in regard to other items. This

is a small matter which, I think, requires clearing up. Concerning the Commissioner himself, and his duties in America, the Government might well furnish a full statement of particulars. Who is this gentleman, and what is he doing in America? What is the nature of his staff, and what is the establishment generally costing? A friend of mine, who arrived in Australia a fortnight ago from America, said he did not know where to find the Australian Commissioner. Eventually, after considerable inquiry and search, he discovered him in the eighth story of a building; but practically nobody knew where he was or what he was doing. What is the Commissioner doing for the benefit of Australia? The cost of his establishment in the United States of America is set down here at £12,000. It is a large item. Is it justified, or is it likely to be justified?

Mr. CORSER (Wide Bay) [5.52].—

Without unreasonable delay Parliament should be acquainted with the future intentions of the Government concerning shipbuilding. It is of no use to carry on in an uncertain fashion, because that policy would only discourage people who have put large sums of money into the business. They did so because it was understood to be the policy of the Government to encourage and continue the industry in Australia. It has been remarked that the difficulty has been to build as cheaply here as in Great Britain. At present vessels cannot be built more cheaply in the United Kingdom than we are able to build here. We understand that the policy of the Government is to encourage shipbuilding for the future, and that it is intended to deflect 25 per cent. of import duty in connexion with vessels to arrive for Inter-State service after a given date. Even if the cost of construction in the United Kingdom, or in other parts of the world, were to drop, the outcome of this imposition, amounting to 25 per cent., would still favour the construction of shipping in the Commonwealth. We know that vessels are now required around our coasts, and that there is not sufficient tonnage available. If no ships of light draught are built or brought into Australian waters during the immediate future, then, during the next sugar season in Queensland, there will not be sufficient

shipping to handle the commodity. There is a certain class of vessel of low draught which is suitable for this trade, but we have not sufficient of that tonnage available now. Something should be done now to insure our getting the sugar away from Queensland ports as speedily as possible after manufacture. There is no room to accumulate large stocks safely at the different ports in Queensland; and, if the sugar is left stacked there for any length of time, it may be considerably damaged, if not utterly destroyed, by cyclones or floods. I am giving this information to the Treasurer, because I think that, in matters of this kind, we should make provision in advance. I should like the right honorable gentleman to know what one firm alone has done as the result of entering into a contract for the manufacture of a certain class of steamers. Under the heading of "Preparatory work," they say—

To show how important it is that there should be a definite programme extending over a period of several years, I desire to point out that before we could do a single thing towards starting on the present contract for four ships for the Commonwealth Government we had to lay down slips, pile same, amounting to hundreds of piles, erect uprights and staging, manufacture machines, such as punching and shearing machines, hydraulic and manhole punching machines, bending machines, rolls, furnaces, bending blocks, scribe boards, mould loft and plant, and machines of all descriptions. This has been done at an expense of something like £40,000. This is only on preparatory work, and has nothing to do with the actual building of the ships.

I am sure honorable members will see that if all this money has to be expended for the purpose of making these slips effective for the construction of vessels, the owners of the slips should be informed as soon as possible of what is to be the future policy of the Government. To make a success of shipbuilding in Australia it is absolutely essential to give confidence to both employer and employee; that the Government should have a defence programme extending over a period of years to encourage private firms to thoroughly equip, and enable them to compete in the open market with Great Britain, Japan and America. It would also help to steady the workmen. We have an assurance from Ministers in the imposition of an extra duty upon the

importation of vessels that they intend that ships shall be constructed here. But we do not see any steam-ship companies taking part in the construction of the vessels which will be required by the Commonwealth within the next year or two. I ask the Treasurer whether he can say when the shipbuilding policy of the Government will be announced to the country, so that the necessary preparations may be made, and these people may know precisely where they stand. If we give a guarantee to them which will extend over a definite period, we shall naturally get work done very much cheaper than we can get "catch" work done, such as obtains at present. In Newcastle, we are encouraging large steel works to produce plates for the construction of ships; and, naturally, if they are to incur an enormous expense to enable them to provide plates 6 feet wide, they should have some assurance that those plates will be utilized promptly within the Commonwealth. Otherwise, the money which they are expending to provide the necessary facilities to produce the plates will be practically unproductive. Recently I visited the steel works in Newcastle, and had a talk with the manager there. From him I learned that the cost of manufacturing these plates is a very considerable one, and that the company is trusting to the Commonwealth Government to put forward a shipbuilding policy which will warrant the expenditure which it is now incurring. That policy should be made public as soon as possible in order that shipbuilders may know exactly where they stand.

Sir ROBERT BEST (Kooyong) [6.0].—In the Prime Minister's Department, I notice an item which reads, "Australian Commissioner in the United States of America, £10,890," and I observe that this represents a decrease of £4,837 upon the vote for last year. Just as I entered the chamber, the honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) was making a reference to this particular item. I certainly think that the Committee is entitled to further information in regard to it; but I wish to go a step further. The Prime Minister intimated, some little time ago, that a departure was about to be made, in regard to which I

take the strongest exception. He proposes that there shall be a diplomatic representative of Australia at Washington, and I believe that his idea is founded upon action which has been taken by Canada, which Dominion has nominated a representative in that city. But whatever justification there may be for the appointment of such a Commissioner by Canada, by reason of its contiguity to the United States of America, and of the fact that a great many questions will arise as between those two countries, there can be no justification whatever for the appointment of a diplomatic representative of Australia to Washington. As a matter of fact the questions which will arise in that connexion, as between Australia and America, will be very few indeed. Such questions, if they have arisen in the past, have been settled in the most satisfactory manner through the Foreign Office of the British Government. Of course, the British Government have their Embassy in the United States of America—an Embassy which is fully equipped with all possible information, and which exerts a vast influence. Necessarily, it is in a position to deal with any questions which may arise as between Australia and America in an infinitely better way than we could deal with them. The experience of the past is such as to suggest to us the desirableness of continuing the existing system of diplomatic unity so far as the British Empire is concerned. I can quite understand even the possibility in the future of the Dominions agreeing amongst themselves to representation side by side with the British Embassy at Washington. That course may be desirable, working, of course, hand in hand with the British Embassy. All the Dominions may be so represented. But I do not say that that course is necessary, nor do I think that it is. I can, however, understand a movement amongst the Dominions in that direction. But for Australia to attempt to establish a diplomatic representative in America would be a grave mistake, and would constitute a serious departure from the diplomatic unity of the Empire.

Mr. GREGORY.—That is not intended, is it? It is merely a Trade Commissioner who has been appointed in the United States of America.

Mr. MAXWELL.—I put a question to the Prime Minister regarding this matter

about four weeks ago, and he promised to supply the House with a statement as to the status and functions of the Commissioner.

Sir ROBERT BEST.—I did not know that. But I know that the Prime Minister has intimated his intention of introducing a Bill having for its object the appointment of a diplomatic representative of Australia at Washington. I protest against this step on the ground that it will be a wanton and unnecessary act in these days of economy. That, however, is a minor matter as compared with the more important consideration, which is that such a step would involve a departure from the diplomatic unity of the Empire, and would result in complications which we at present can scarcely realize. The possibility of Australia speaking with a different voice from that of the Mother Country would inevitably result in conflict. This is a matter which should not be decided with any degree of hastiness. I desire, therefore, to be assured that there is not included in this item of £10,890 any money towards the establishment of a diplomatic representative in America. I would urge that, if this matter is to be dealt with at all, it should be dealt with by the Dominions at the approaching Constitutional Imperial Conference. Hitherto we have rejoiced in our ability to speak with a united voice so far as the Empire is concerned. But, if a departure of this kind is to be made, and if we are to cease conducting our diplomatic relations through the Foreign Office of the Mother Country, we shall certainly embroil ourselves, and also the Empire, quite unnecessarily. I cannot conceive what can be the justification for such a suggestion on the part of the Prime Minister. There is, however, a good deal to be said for the appointment in other parts of the world of Trade Commissioners, who would aim at the development of the commercial and trading interests of Australia. That is very desirable, and the functions of the Australian Commissioner who has already been appointed to the United States of America might well be extended, so as to make them more embracing, with that objective in view. But, when it comes to a matter of the conduct of diplomatic relations on behalf of Australia, the position is entirely different.

Mr. GREGORY.—Before expending money elsewhere ought we not to put our house in order in Great Britain, so far as the High Commissioner's Office is concerned?

Sir ROBERT BEST.—Hitherto I have refrained from criticising our unfortunate position in regard to the High Commissioner's Office in the Mother Country. That office is certainly no credit to Australia, and, indeed, has constituted a very serious difficulty. The utter inefficiency of that Department during the war period, so far as trade and commerce is concerned, was very marked. It was in a condition of such hopeless confusion that we were quite unable to get any business satisfactorily transacted there. My object in rising was to ask for an assurance from the Treasurer that this item for £10,890 does not include any contemplated expenditure in regard to the appointment of a diplomatic representative at Washington.

Mr. GREGORY (Dampier) [6.10].—In dealing with this Department—now that the debate upon the want of confidence motion has been concluded—I hope that honorable members will take an independent stand in regard to any items upon the Estimates which they may consider exhibit a lack of appreciation of the urgent need which exists for the exercise of the most stringent economy. I have no desire to embarrass the Government or the Treasurer, but I do think that, with the enormous responsibilities with which we are faced, it is our duty to reduce our expenditure as much as we reasonably can. I am no advocate for foolish economy; there are many ways in which we can advertise and build up this country, and it would be foolish not to spend money for that purpose. I may be wrong, of course, but, in my opinion, I think that the Prime Minister's Department should not be regarded as a general administrative Department. The Prime Minister himself has duties so multifarious that he cannot give that attention to his administrative work that Ministers of other Departments are able to give. It must not be forgotten that the Prime Minister's Department is not really a Department, but merely a branch, which has grown up recently, and particularly during the war. Now it, perhaps, may

be described as a huge administrative Department with many sub-Departments. There has not been that building up in connexion with this Department that there has been in connexion with the others, which have taken years to grow, and have produced specially-trained officers. For instance, under the Department for Home and Territories quite a number of sub-Departments have been gradually built up, and the same remark applies to other Departments: but in the case of the Prime Minister's Department its growth has been sudden, and has not produced that wealth of experience we find elsewhere. In saying this I have no desire to reflect on any of the officers, beyond saying that they have not the advantage of that life-time experience which is at the service of other Departments. The other day the Treasurer asked for instances of where the Prime Minister's Department had interfered with other Departments. It is a fact that, not content with the control of matters strictly within its purview under the Estimates, the Prime Minister's Department and the Attorney-General's Department have continually interfered with other work. As an illustration, the question of the export of metals ought to be under the sole control of the Department of Trade and Customs; yet when I refer, in connexion with this matter, to the Minister for Trade and Customs, I am told that it comes within the scope of the Attorney-General's Department. Why should the Attorney-General's Department interfere in such a matter? Of course, I can understand the Minister for Trade and Customs seeking legal advice from the Attorney-General's Department, but there should not be the present administrative interference. Then the Prime Minister's Department has interfered with and used in this connexion the Australian Metal Exchange. A little while ago, some people decided to export scrap iron from Western Australia, and the whole of the subsequent trouble arose through the interference of the Prime Minister's Department and the Attorney-General's Department, though, of course, it is a matter for the Department of Trade and Customs. In the case of sugar, we find Colonel Oldershaw, an official of the Attorney-General's Department, assuming

Mr. Gregory.

control, although the Minister for Trade and Customs meets deputations and makes promises, not only to people outside, but to honorable members of this House. In reference to any commodity or works, there ought to be definite control of these matters by definite Departments. For instance, shipbuilding should be at once taken from the administration of the Prime Minister's Department and placed under the Minister for Home and Territories.

It is understood that the Government propose to appoint Trade Commissioners; and, if these appointments mean what was indicated by the honorable member for Kooyong (Sir Robert Best), then, of course, they should be under the control of the Prime Minister. If it is the intention of the Government to appoint a number of such Commissioners, Ministers ought to take honorable members into their confidence and explain how it is proposed by this means to build up the trade of Australia. I quite agree with the honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) that it is possible to create a big export trade with Eastern countries. Recently Mr. Walter Kingsmill, President of the Legislative Council of Western Australia, after a visit to the north and east, published a most interesting report showing the great possibilities in this direction.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The other day Mr. John McWhae published a similar and very interesting report.

Mr. GREGORY.—If these Commissioners are appointed they need not be expensive men, but men of experience and reliability, who will keep in view the interests of Australia, and not merely build up a trade for themselves or their friends.

Mr. GABB.—I beg to draw attention to the state of the Committee. [*Quorum formed.*]

Mr. GREGORY.—I impress on the Government the danger of appointing any representatives, either in America or elsewhere, with ambassadorial powers, for in such appointments there is an element of grave danger which may cause irretrievable injury to Australia and the Empire. However, we have no knowledge that it is really the intention of the Government to appoint Commissioners of the kind at the present time;

and I only hope that they will not do so, for I should feel compelled to strongly oppose the proposal. With Trade Commissioners, pure and simple, some good could be done in building up the trade of Australia. If these appointments are made with discretion, and a proper scheme of advertising entered upon, particularly in the Eastern countries, and, perhaps, in other parts of the world, much good might be done. However, as I was saying, the Prime Minister's Department is growing enormously. I understand the mover of the amendment will withdraw it so as to enable the items to be dealt with separately. There are one or two subjects which I think the Committee might deal with in a very drastic manner, and in connexion with which we should have some explanation from the Minister. It is my intention, at the proper time, to get the opinion of the Committee as to whether or not it would be wise to transfer some of the Government activities from the Prime Minister's Department to that of some other Minister. I have urged previously that this should not be the main administrative Department of the Commonwealth. I hope the Committee will agree, for instance, to place shipbuilding under the control of another Minister. Then there is the question of mail services, and the Port Pirie wharfs. There is no reason at all why these matters should come under the control of the Prime Minister's Department. The Minister for Home and Territories has been dealing with shipping for a long time, and understands his work. I hope, therefore, that these matters will come under his control.

I do not wish to say anything concerning the High Commissioner himself, but I think we have not received anything like the satisfaction we are entitled to expect from the enormous expenditure incurred in that Department, the sum spent last year being over £63,000, to which must be added the salary of the High Commissioner himself. I agree with the remarks made by the honorable member for Flinders (Mr. Bruce) that we ought to get from revenue any money required for that office building.

Mr. RILEY.—I think the High Commissioner's Office was built out of revenue.

Mr. GREGORY.—That is not so. The honorable member will find the item in

the Loan Estimates for this year. Undoubtedly there was heavier expenditure in the High Commissioner's Office during the war owing to the necessity of looking after the interests of Australians at Home, and I make no comment as to the cost of temporary assistance; but we are now back to normal times, and the expenditure incurred by this office is greatly in excess of the value received. The High Commissioner's Office, like the Agents-General Departments, should be a fine trading establishment. The Agent-General for Western Australia, Sir J. Connolly, has been doing wonderful work in England.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—He is a very good man.

Mr. GREGORY.—He is an ordinary, but solid and good business man, keenly alive to the interests of his State.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—And pretty pertinaacious. When I was at Home I thought he was an excellent representative of his State.

Mr. GREGORY.—He is endeavouring all the time to bring the possibilities of his State before the people of Great Britain. Unfortunately, I see no attempt on the part of the Commonwealth High Commissioner's Department to do as well for Australia as a whole as the Agent-General for Western Australia is doing for his State. And that is what we want. I should expect a fortnightly letter from the High Commissioner telling the people of Australia about the possibilities of trade development in the Mother Country, and how far he was helping in that direction.

I notice the immigration vote is not included in this Department, and when we come to that vote I shall want to know whether the High Commissioner's Office is going to work in unison with our immigration officials. In my judgment, the High Commissioner should control them. He is the gentleman to whom we look for protection of our interests in the Mother Country. It is possible that an immigration officer might paint too rosy a picture of the conditions in Australia. The High Commissioner should be able to control and advise the Commonwealth Government if good work is being done in connexion with our immigration policy. I am greatly in favour

of immigration, but I do not want it to be possible for any immigrant to be able to say honestly that he has been brought out here under false pretences.

Mr. LISTER.—Thousands have been.

Mr. GREGORY.—Yes; and when we get to the Immigration Department I intend to say a word or two with reference to an appointment recently made. I do not think the Government have selected a good man. They should not make any appointment as a reward for good and loyal political service. We know what harm was done in the old days by immigration officers who made specious promises to intending immigrants, with the result that they did us more harm than good. I hope the mover of the amendment will withdraw it, so that we may deal with various sub-Departments in the proper way.

Dr. EARLE PAGE (Cowper) [6.28].

—I ask leave to withdraw my amendment. My intention was merely to secure an expression of opinion from the Committee as to the transfer of certain activities from the Prime Minister's Department, and, as my purpose will be otherwise effected by amendments on them, I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Sitting suspended from 6.29 to 8 p.m.

Mr. BELL (Darwin) [8.0].—Last week, when speaking on the amendment moved by the honorable member for Franklin (Mr. McWilliams), I intimated that I thought the amount provided for the High Commissioner's Office, London, could be reduced. Last year we voted £45,123 for this Office, but the actual expenditure exceeded the vote by £17,914, and I would very much like to hear from the Treasurer (Sir Joseph Cook) the reason for this huge excess. In any case, in order to reduce the amount to what was placed on the Estimates last year, I move—

That the proposed vote "High Commissioner's Office, £53,974," be reduced by £8,851.

The High Commissioner's Office is costing more than double what it should cost, judging the value of the work done by the benefits accruing to Australia, and I am hopeful that the Committee will consent to this reduction as an intimation

that the Office must be re-organized in accordance with the wishes of honorable members. The item "Medical Officer, £800," I think, could very well be struck out, because, as apparently there are only twenty-three persons in the Office of the High Commissioner, there seems to be no need for the services of a medical officer. No explanation has been given in regard to the item of £5,000 for "stationery, travelling, and incidental expenses." This seems a large amount, but this, again, is an item which, I think, could very well be reduced. Another item which appears excessive is "Upkeep of Australia House, £13,000." Last week, I mentioned that Australia House had become, to a great extent, a place of amusement, and it is quite evident that, if we are to maintain for the benefit of our officials in London, and the few Australians temporarily there, a house at which they can obtain amusement, the cost of upkeep will be heavy, but this, again, is an item which, I think, could very well be reduced, particularly as it does not include taxation or the salary of the caretaker. There is another item of £3,400, for "advertising resources of Commonwealth." Does any honorable member claim that we are getting value for the expenditure of this money? In any case, I hardly see the necessity for spending £3,400 in advertising the resources of the Commonwealth when we are informed that £100,000 has been placed in these Estimates for immigration, and that we are sending agents to Great Britain to advertise Australia with a view to securing more immigrants. In my opinion, the best place to advertise Australia, if we wish to encourage immigration, is in Australia. The people of the Commonwealth will always be willing to pay for efficiency, but I do not think that many of us can claim that efficiency has been displayed in the Office of the High Commissioner to the value of £53,974. I hope that the decision of the Committee will be an indication to Senator E. D. Millen that the opinion of honorable members is that the expenditure on the High Commissioner's Office must be reduced. It is a task which ought to be undertaken by the High Commissioner himself, and I trust that the next gentleman appointed

to the position will receive definite instructions from the Government that the expense of his Office must not be anything like what it is to-day.

Sir JOSEPH COOK (Parramatta—Treasurer) [8.10].—The speech of the honorable member for Darwin (Mr. Bell) is an example of what frequently faces one in a Committee of this kind. The honorable member knows all about the matter before he rises to speak, and, after moving for a reduction of the vote by over £8,000, directs his attention to certain items on which he considers there should be retrenchment, but about all of which he confesses he knows nothing.

Mr. BELL.—I certainly did not make that confession.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The honorable member did make that confession. He said that he would like to know something about the £13,000 for the up-keep of Australia House.

Mr. BELL.—It is obvious that the item is to provide money to maintain a place of amusement in London.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I was in Australia House as frequently as my friend was, and I did not see any of those amusements to which he has made reference; yet, because it happens that at some time or another a dance was held there, the place must be written down as having been given over to that sort of thing. Such criticism is very unfair, and has neither sense nor intelligence in it. The honorable member might just as well say that because a dinner is held occasionally in Queen's Hall, this House of Parliament is given over to amusement, or is merely a place of refreshment. Such an assertion would not be fair, nor are the remarks of the honorable member fair as applied to Australia House. When I was in London, there was a steady stream of visitors to Australia House all day long, and this place, which was supposed to have been given over to amusement, was then filled with war memorials.

Mr. BELL.—They will not be there next year.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—No; but it does not follow that the space they occupied is in future to be used as a dance room. To declare that the incidental occurrence of a dance in the building, a mere once in its history, converts it into

a place of amusement as a normal condition of affairs is not fair criticism. We have built in London a house which cost £1,000,000, and my conviction is that it is worth £1,000,000 a year to Australia, even if it does little more than exist as a building. No one can go through the Strand without stopping to look at it and inquire what it is, to whom it belongs, and all about Australia. Therefore, as an advertisement alone, it is worth an immense amount of money to us. It houses activities connected with the Customs Department, and our Naval and Military affairs. We have a Navy officer, who is the liaison officer between the Commonwealth Government and the Imperial Navy. Dr. Woolnough, one of the best officers who has been sent from our University, inspects our machinery before it is despatched to Australia. We must have officers to make inquiries concerning our naval requirements and keep in touch, as far as possible, with what goes on at the Admiralty. These officers are necessary and useful, and are such as we should have in London.

May I remind honorable members that the State Governments are similarly represented, as they have their scientific men to advise what should be purchased. If honorable members are going to dispense with these officers, they had better start an agitation for the State Governments to act similarly, and so maroon Australia that no business at all will be done. These representatives are selected because of their special qualifications and service, but because they are out of sight and, generally, out of mind, some begin to think that they are perfectly useless, and are doing nothing but drawing their salaries. These men are busily engaged throughout the year in performing useful work for the Commonwealth, and earn their money by working earnestly, laboriously, and sincerely in the interest of Australia just as if they were right under our eyes. The mere fact that we do not visit Australia House as we do other Departments does not prove that these officers are not performing useful work, administratively and scientifically. Australia House is an imposing structure, accommodating a number of activities, all of which are of use to the Commonwealth, and we could not dispense with

these activities in relation to the Navy or Army without decreasing the efficiency of those services.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—We do not want to dispense with them; but we desire to ascertain how the building is let, and if all the States have offices there.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Some of them have.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Does the High Commissioner furnish an annual report?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Yes. Honorable members can obtain all the information concerning the activities of Australia House in that document, and it would be much better if they perused the report, because we would not then have so much criticism. We shall receive in rents from various State Governments and from other tenants occupying rooms in the building during the year, £23,400. The estimated net cost of maintenance is £34,128.

Dr. EARLE PAGE.—Is that inclusive of interest?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Yes. It must be remembered, however, that if we were not occupying offices in Australia House we would have to rent accommodation elsewhere, the estimated cost of which would be £30,000 a year. There is interest and other items connected with Australia House, and honorable members must make up their minds whether the expense of this agency in London, set against the whole activities of the Commonwealth, is worth the money or not. For instance, every day Australia House is besieged by persons who go from Australia to London, and, on an average, there is a colony of 3,000 Australians in London.

Mr. BELL.—And I have had the opinion of some of those who have recently visited the building.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—No doubt the honorable member has; but I could quote opinions quite contrary to those which he would doubtless instance. These gentlemen have, perhaps, been to Australia House, and have not been treated in what they consider a proper manner. The honorable member could probably criticise the treatment shown to visitors in other Government Departments in Australia, because, occasionally, persons visiting Commonwealth Departments here do not always receive the courtesy

and consideration to which they think they are entitled. It is so in connexion with the 3,000 Australians who are perpetually in London. I do not suggest that the same 3,000 persons are there the whole time, but on an average there are 3,000 Australians in England who go to Australia House in search of all kinds of information. It is quite possible that some visitors return without having gained all they desired.

There are many who go to Australia House to obtain particulars concerning Australia and its commercial interests, and altogether, the Commonwealth Offices are serving a very useful purpose in that respect. Honorable members must not lose sight of the fact that immigration is going on all the time, even when no special effort is in progress, because ships are continually bringing new settlers to Australia. All these people are dealt with at Australia House, and the fact that our officers there are conducting a publicity campaign, and facilitating the movements of these people, is one reason why the steady stream continues. We are now proposing to accelerate that flow, and instead of immigrants coming in dribblets we hope, with improved organization, to considerably increase the number. We do not see or hear of all that is being done, but that is no reason why we should say that our representatives are not doing anything.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—The complaint is that they are not doing these things.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The Government are taking steps to re-organize the whole immigration question, and are sending to England Mr. Percy Hunter, who will be associated with the High Commissioner.

Mr. LAVELLE.—A Nationalist organizer.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—He is not.

Mr. MCWILLIAMS.—Who is to be the new High Commissioner?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—That is more than I can tell the honorable member, as I have not the remotest idea; but I trust that he will be a good man.

Mr. BELL.—If the Treasurer will allow me to select the High Commissioner I am prepared to withdraw my amendment.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—That appears to be a fair offer.

As to the upkeep of Australia House, I may remind honorable members that

the cost of maintaining any institution in London is naturally very heavy. Included in the items under this heading electric light and power amounts to £2,500 a year. Other items are the supply of coke, £1,500 a year, wages £6,000, war bonus £1,500. The total is also made up of a multitude of small items which include rates and taxes, house requisites, engineering and joinery repairs, electric clocks, automatic telephones, and there is an item of £30 for window breakages. I do not know what they have been doing to incur that expenditure; but that is a sample of the items for upkeep.

As to Australia House, and what we are doing there, I desire to make a general observation to enable honorable members to make up their minds whether the expenditure is justified. I believe it is.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Or whether it could be put to a better use.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The Minister for Repatriation (Senator E. D. Millen) has gone to Great Britain charged with the duty of attempting to re-organize it.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Does not the Treasurer think that the new Commissioner should undertake the work of re-organization?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—There may be something in that.

Mr. LAVELLE.—Is Mr. Percy Hunter to be appointed the next High Commissioner?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—No. He is to attend to immigration matters solely.

Mr. LAVELLE.—Will the Treasurer explain the item "Medical officer, £800"?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—That relates to a vacancy in the office that has arisen owing to the resignation of Dr. Norris, who has been in London for many years acting as medical referee for the Government, inspecting immigrants and supervising the medical work in connexion with their despatch from London. It is not a new office. As to the general activities of the Department, I would like to remind honorable members of what is an undoubted fact, that we spend a great deal less in this respect, considering our population, than any other country in the world. Honorable members know quite well that Sweden, and the Netherlands—very small communities—have their officers in Australia, and if they consider

it desirable to be represented in an outpost of the world such as this it should surely pay us to have our officers in the great metropolis overseas. The same remark will apply to the United States of America; and Canada, again, has to my knowledge had a Commissioner in Australia for the past twenty years, and would not maintain a representative here if her people did not find that it paid them to do so.

Mr. BELL.—My amendment is not for the abolition of the office.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—No; it is to cut out the vote that keeps the office in existence. The honorable member would not abolish the office, but he would not provide anything to keep it going.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—What is the size of the staff there?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—There are twenty-three provided for in these Estimates; but there are also the other activities that I have mentioned. We have a Naval staff and a Military staff in London. Colonel Buckley is our military representative, a business man of independent means, who was one of the best officers we ever had in the Defence Department here. He is a well-to-do man, but in London, as in Australia, he keeps at his post for sheer love of the work. There is not a harder worker in London than he.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Who is the officer in charge of the publicity branch?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Captain Smart. He was originally a journalist in Australia; I think on the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Mr. MATHEWS.—Is he connected with immigration or with election matters?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—He is concerned with immigration chiefly, and general publicity work. He has been in London for a good many years now, and conducts campaigns to assist immigration and the general advertising of the resources of Australia. Work of this kind is going on all the year round, and to assess its value aright it would be necessary to investigate its effects upon the relations between Australia and the United Kingdom, and the benefits it confers upon this community in all sorts of ways.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—Was the large sum spent last year war expenditure?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Yes. Special war claims came in from time to time. We are getting back to normal, and expect that the amount set down for this year will carry us through the whole twelve months.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—The vote here this year is only £10,000 less than the expenditure of last year.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Many of the war activities are charged to various accounts under Defence and Navy. The amount in the Estimates immediately before us provides for the activities of Australia House alone, for this year only.

It has been suggested that many of the matters dealt with by the Prime Minister should be transferred to the administration of other Departments. The Prime Minister's Department is one that cannot be done without.

Mr. ATKINSON.—Was it necessary in the first instance?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Yes.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I remember hearing you say that it was not.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Perhaps so; but circumstances have been entirely altered by the war. Our status in the Empire requires us to maintain a Minister for External Affairs, as do also our responsibilities in the Pacific and our connexion with the League of Nations. It must not be forgotten that the Commonwealth started with a Department of External Affairs. That Department has been merged in the Prime Minister's Department.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—With a lot of others.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—That may be so. Criticise him as you may, the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) has, during the past twelve months, since his return from Europe, saved this country many hundreds of thousands of pounds by keeping the industrial peace. That is an activity centred in his Department. It is fortunate that we have had some one with his long experience of seafaring men to deal with our shipbuilding difficulties. In considering results, the troubles from which we have escaped by reason of what has been done by the Prime Minister should not be forgotten.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—The Prime Minister's Department is the External

Affairs Department proper, plus trading Departments.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Yes.

Reference has been made to the Island mail service, the vote for which is increased this year by £18,000. That increase is due to an enlargement of the scope of the mail service and to increases in costs of running generally. Where should that expenditure be provided for if not in the Estimates of the External Affairs Department? The service is to provide communication with the Islands, which are to be administered by that Department. Take, again, shipbuilding, which does not cost the taxpayer of this country a penny. The items under that head are merely advances to trust funds, and are balanced by the profits.

Mr. ATKINSON.—If our shipbuilding were not a success, it would cost the taxpayer something.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Of course, in that case there would be a loss to make good; but, so far, it has been a success. My recollection is that, according to the last figures presented, our shipbuilding, so far, has cost about £28 10s. per ton. To-night we have had two kinds of criticism of it. The honorable member for Wakefield (Mr. Richard Foster) said, "We must not build any more ships if we cannot build them as cheaply as they can be built elsewhere," but another honorable member said, "We must build ships anyhow, because without them we cannot move our produce."

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—He was thinking of the interests of Maryborough.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The honorable member for Wide Bay (Mr. Corser), like the honorable member for Wakefield and the honorable member who has moved the reduction under discussion (Mr. Bell), all take broad national views, especially when such views centre near their back doors. [*Extension of time granted.*] I hope that the greatest economy will be observed in our shipbuilding, because I do not desire that our ships shall cost too much. We have two shipyards, and we must do something with them.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—I would sooner have them idle than lose money on them.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—They have cost well over £1,000,000, so that we cannot afford to keep them idle, and must make the best use of them we can.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—If the industrialists are going to run the yards, it will be better to leave shipbuilding alone.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—So far, ships have been built as cheaply here as they could have been built elsewhere. I do not say that that will continue for all time, though I hope that it may. The amalgamation of our shipbuilding and the placing of it under one control is in contemplation. We are going to take the control from the Navy Department, and I hope that thereby a big saving will be effected. We intend to get the best commercial management, and there seems no reason why we should not be able to build ships as cheaply as they can be built overseas, though there is no reason for criticism on that score at the present time. I agree with those who say that the strictest commercial tests should be applied to the work done. One of the chief things is to maintain industrial peace, which happily we have been able to do during the past two years. Efficiency, continuity of operations, and industrial contentment and peace are essentials. That we have been able to keep industrial peace is largely due to the Prime Minister, who has ways of dealing with industrialists when he can meet them face to face such as few other men possess.

Mr. MATHEWS.—You are flattering him.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I am not flattering him; I am speaking the truth. I have been with him on these Conferences, and I say that few men could do better with the industrialists of this country than he does. The results are to be seen in our shipyards to-day. We must, therefore, recollect that there have been advantages flowing from the Prime Minister's dealings in these matters, and that they more than offset any disadvantages. I admit at the same time that the Prime Minister is always doing the work of three or four men. It is his way, but he does it efficiently and well. While there have been innumerable strikes during the past twelve months in nearly every other country, we have been kept almost wholly free from them. A great deal of the credit for that happy state of affairs is due to the Prime Minister.

As to shipbuilding, the salient points are these: We want ships. We have these two yards of our own, and we must

do something with them. They are manned by efficient staffs, and, when they are amalgamated, I believe we shall still be able to produce ships in Australia as cheaply as elsewhere.

I come now to the question of agencies abroad, to which, perhaps, I ought to have referred when dealing with Australia House. I have only to say that, in this regard, again, we are very much behind the rest of the world. Take, for instance, America. One finds that nearly every small community has official representation there. When the Prime Minister and I passed through the United States of America, on our way Home, we found that Australia had no one to represent her there. One illustration will show the need of having some one on the spot. Our shipbuilding here was being held up for want of plates which we had purchased in America. When the authorities of the United States of America entered upon their shipbuilding business they cancelled our order for plates, and we were left without supplies to complete our ships. We had no one there to put our case. Our only means of communication was through the British Embassy, and the British Embassy had then, as it always has, tremendous commercial interests of its own, and as much as it could do to look after its own affairs. We found, on the other hand, that Canada had twelve of the best business men to be found in the Dominion operating all the time in the United States of America. In Washington we had not a representative; the position was the same in New York. Canada and every other country had agencies there, but we were entirely without representation. Honorable members must make up their minds as to whether these agencies pay. The experience of other countries is that they pay handsomely, and they are being multiplied all over the world. If it pays Canada to maintain an agency here at the Seat of Government, and to have a separate office in every State of the Commonwealth, it should pay us to have at least some representation in a country like America.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—Did Mr. Bradon recommend the continuance of our trade agency in the United States of America?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I understood so, and everybody who has been there,

including Mr.—or Sir Henry Braddon, as he now is—has done so. I venture to say in passing that, if ever a distinction has been earned by merit, it has been earned by Sir Henry Braddon. He says that we need to get into much closer touch with America than we have been. It is to our business, as well as our diplomatic and political advantage, to do so. The United States of America is one of the great Powers abutting on the Pacific. We have to get into closer touch with her, politically as well as commercially, and the closer the intimacy we can breed and perpetuate with her, the better for our future safety, as well as for our future prosperity.

Then, again, take the East. It has been well said that we are building here a Western nation with an Eastern trade outlook. I believe that to be true. The East in time will become, perhaps, our best customer for our raw products, and it is therefore of the utmost importance that we should have representatives in all these countries where there is business to be done. Honorable members must not imagine when they see, for this purpose, a proposed vote of £10,000 on the Estimates that there is no credit to be set against it. The credit may even be intangible; it may be impossible to locate it, but it is none the less there. If we create an atmosphere of commercial intimacy, knowledge, and commercial amity, that in itself is worth more than we pay, to say nothing of the tangible results which from time to time express themselves in our imports and exports. In all these matters we must make up our minds that the authorities in other countries are not fools. They know what is to their advantage, and we cannot do better than follow in the footsteps of the most enlightened nations of the earth, who are multiplying instead of decreasing these agencies. We have only to see that good men are selected for these positions. If a man is selected for any one of them, and he cannot make more out of it for the country than his salary and expenses, he is not worth much.

Mr. ATKINSON.—Does the right honorable gentleman think that our experience of having a Trade Commissioner in the United States of America shows that it pays to be represented there?

Sir Joseph Cook.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Yes, over and over again.

Mr. GREENE. — The commercial community frequently make the greatest use of him.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—They make use of him over and over again. The United States of America is a tremendously big country, and in travelling through it one finds that some of the big nations have agencies in nearly every State. It pays them to have them. We have, as I have said, only one in New York. We want in addition one in Washington, who would be able to look after, not merely the commercial and material side, but also our political interests.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—He would be an Ambassador.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—We need not discuss now whether he should be an Ambassador or not. There is work to be done in direct association with the British Legation at Washington, and in connexion with the Government at Washington, by somebody, whether you call him an Ambassador or not. I agree with the honorable member for Kooyong (Sir Robert Best), and hope that nothing will ever interfere with the diplomatic unity of the Empire.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—It will be a bad job for us when it is interfered with.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I think so; but it does not necessarily follow that we are interfering with the ultimate unity and efficiency of our Empire diplomacy when we put our Australian view to the Government at Washington just as other nations making up the Empire are doing. Canada has, and has had for a long time, her representative at Washington. She proposed last year to alter his status and to make him an Ambassador, but I think she has deferred that proposal pending discussion at the Imperial Conference next year. Something should be done by us to establish an agency at Washington, in addition to one at New York. That is an imperative necessity of the moment, and it would pay Australia over and over again to assent to it, even if the cost should be very much more than our present agency.

Mr. ATKINSON.—What will be the relationship between the High Commissioner's Office and the new immigration scheme?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The High Commissioner's Office should control immigration. Whatever separate immigration agency is set up in the Old Country must, in my opinion, be under the ultimate control of the High Commissioner. It will be one of the activities of the High Commissioner's Office.

Mr. ATKINSON.—But is that to be the relationship?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Yes, as I understand it. We are sending over a special immigration officer, who will work in the High Commissioner's Office and will be under the final control of the High Commissioner.

Mr. JOWETT.—The Treasurer is referring to Mr. Percy Hunter?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Yes. The High Commissioner will be wise in giving a new man who knows his job his head, but, at the same time, the final control must be with the High Commissioner. If we can galvanize that section of our activities in the Old Country into still greater activity, it will be worth all the money we propose to spend in that direction. It is a vital necessity. As I have said before, we must people or perish. We have not enough people to hold this country or to meet readily and easily our financial and other obligations as they arise. To people this country should be the chief objective of any Government which holds office, and the moment it neglects that duty it should be removed from office.

I, therefore, suggest to my honorable friend who has submitted this amendment that he should allow it to stand over until next year. By that time the re-organizations already in process will have been made, and when the honorable member sees what has been done he will be able to criticise it. I have no doubt whatever he will have a very much better view of it than he has to-night.

Mr. BELL.—I think I am very mild.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I think the honorable member is, since no man in his position can know all that is doing in Australia House. It has always seemed to me to be somewhat unfortu-

nate that Australia House is so far away. It is out of sight, and very often, I am afraid, out of mind. It is only when we see the cost of it on the Estimates that we begin to wonder whether it is doing anything.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER.—We have not yet had an encouraging stimulating report from Australia House.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—I hope we shall get one before very long. Meantime, I have been doing my best for the last three-quarters of an hour to supply the Committee with full information.

Mr. McWILLIAMS (Franklin) [8.57].—The Treasurer (Sir Joseph Cook) has given us a really excellent description of the work that ought to be done by the High Commissioner's Office. Unfortunately, all the reports we receive show that this work is not being done. The truth is that the High Commissioner's Office has been made, to a very large extent, the plaything of party politics. The position of High Commissioner will become vacant in January next, and the gentleman who is to be appointed to fill it should have been selected weeks ago and sent to England. To him alone should be left the work of re-organization. The present Commissioner could be given leave of absence. We all regret very much to hear that his health is far from satisfactory. If it is such as it is reported to be by those who have recently been in his office, it is cruel to keep him there, and he should have been given leave of absence long ago. The Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes), the Treasurer (Sir Joseph Cook), and the Minister for Defence (Senator Pearce) were in England for some time, and if any re-organization were necessary they could have suggested it. But it is not fair to Australia that the appointment of a successor to the present High Commissioner should be left until the last moment. I repeat that he should have been appointed weeks, if not months, ago. The gentleman who has to do the work in the office should be the man who is to re-organize it. Senator E. D. Millen may re-organize the office in a way that the new High Commissioner may disapprove of entirely, and he may set to work to re-organize it again. I therefore urge the Government to make that appointment

at once, and let the gentleman appointed proceed to take up the work and re-organize the office. Heaven knows, and reports which have reached us show, that it is sadly in need of re-organization!

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—What is wrong?

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I am referring to reports that come to hand from men who have been to England, and have returned in the last few weeks.

Mr. BRENNAN.—Has anybody ever read a report yet?

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I have not read the last report, but I have read the preceding one, and he would be an exceedingly enthusiastic person who could get very much comfort from it. It is a known fact that the health of the present High Commissioner is not satisfactory. I yield to no man in respect for Mr. Fisher—

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—You are not showing it, at any rate.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I am showing it. Why is it necessary to send a Minister Home to re-organize the office if everything is satisfactory?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—There is a new departure.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Is that the reason? According to my reports, the health of the present occupant of the office has, unfortunately, been such as every one in the House regrets. I yield to no man in respect for Mr. Fisher as an individual. I held him in the highest respect when he was in this House, although sitting on the opposite side. There was never a member of the House who conducted himself in whatever position he occupied more creditably than did Andrew Fisher.

Sir GRANVILLE RYRIE.—He is the only man who did anything for me when I was in England.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—Yet he is doing nothing! He is as white a man as ever drew breath.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I admit it at once. His term of office expires in January. Surely if it is necessary to re-organize the office—say if you like that it is because new activities have come into it—the man who has to carry out the work when the appointment is absolutely falling due should do the re-organ-

izing, in accordance with the views and objectives which he intends to follow.

When I sought, on the first item, to obtain a reduction of £1,000,000 in the Estimates, I said I did not anticipate that any material reductions could be made when we were going through the Estimates item by item. I think we shall find it practically impossible to secure a reduction.

Mr. BAMFORD.—It has been done here.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I saw it done only once, when Mr. J. C. Watson, sitting in this corner, succeeded in reducing the Defence estimates by one-half.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—He was sitting on this side.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I think he was sitting on the cross benches. It was when the Deakin Government was in office.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—It was the Barton Government, and Sir George Turner was the Treasurer.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I was not in the House in the time of the Barton Government. I think Sir George Turner was also Treasurer in the Deakin Government. That is the only time in the Federal Parliament that I have known any material reduction to be made in the Estimates. The honorable member for Darwin (Mr. Bell) says he intends to move for reductions. I hope he succeeds, but when he has been as long in the House as some of us he will realize that it is practically impossible to secure reductions in items, because when one man objects to an item another will support it, and *vice versa*.

There is a general feeling that the people of Australia have not obtained, since the very first day that the High Commissioner's Office was created, a fair return for the money spent on it in London, or from Australia House. That is my opinion, the opinion of a good many members of the House, and certainly the opinion of a great many people of all classes who have been to England and have visited Australia House. On coming back they have told us that Australia is not receiving a proper return for the amount that she is expending. There is very important work to be done in the way of immigration. For the first time since it has been inaugurated, a great work in that direction will be put, I hope directly, in the hands of the High Commissioner. His office should be the

centre of the whole system for immigration in the Old Country. As the Government are undertaking an immigration policy, surely it is common sense to appoint the new High Commissioner now, and let him make his arrangements in accordance with his objectives.

Sir GRANVILLE RYRIE.—What would be the position of Mr. Fisher?

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—I would give Mr. Fisher well-deserved leave of absence on full pay until his term ran out. If the Government appointed a new High Commissioner at once, he could not complete his arrangements here and reach England much before Mr. Fisher's term expires in the middle of February.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—It expires in January.

Mr. McWILLIAMS.—Then, if the new man were appointed now, I doubt if he could get to England, after completing his arrangements in Australia, much before the office became vacant. We all know that the High Commissioner's Office will have to be completely re-organized in view of the new work that it is proposed that it shall undertake. It is not fair to Parliament, or to the people of Australia, to allow it to be re-organized by a Minister who does not intend to remain there, with the risk of the re-organization not suiting the views of the new High Commissioner, who may have to start to re-organize it all over again. I know nothing about Mr. Percy Hunter, but I do, unfortunately, know something about Mr. Barnes, the other immigration agent who is going to England.

Mr. LAVELLE (Calare) [9.11].—I support the motion of the honorable member for Darwin (Mr. Bell). I listened at the outset with particular attention to the speech of the Treasurer (Sir Joseph Cook). Although the honorable member for Franklin (Mr. McWilliams) said that the Treasurer gave us a very good account of what should be done by the High Commissioner's Office, the principal point in the Treasurer's speech seemed to me to be the fact that it serves in England to-day as an information bureau for wealthy tourists. The Treasurer said there were a number of Australians holiday-making in England when the war was on, and afterwards,

and that they found it very convenient to go to Australia House to obtain information. I have no doubt that our wealthy tourist friends do find it convenient, but I do not think that is the purpose for which the High Commissioner was appointed or Australia House built. The Treasurer also said that the Government are sending Home a gentleman named Percy Hunter to deal with the question of immigration. That appointment is another illustration of the policy of spoils to the victors. Percy Hunter has been the chief Nationalist organizer in New South Wales for some time; in fact, the arrangement entered into when Mr. Holman and Mr. Wade formed the Coalition Conscription Government in New South Wales was that Wade was to get the Agent-Generalship, Percy Hunter was to be appointed Chief Organizer, and Cohen was to get a Judgeship. The same Percy Hunter, who has been a very good organizer for the National party, is now being sent to England at our expense, allegedly to be employed there as Immigration Agent. I do not know whether he is fitted for that position, but I agree with the honorable member for Franklin that the High Commissioner should control immigration, and be responsible for the immigration policy at the other end. Although I listened carefully to the Treasurer's speech, I did not hear him give a satisfactory answer to the question I raised in the House the other evening, when I asked what was the necessity to spend £10,000 on the trip of the Prime Minister and the right honorable gentleman to England, to the Peace Conference, and to various other places, if we are getting value for the money we are spending over there.

Mr. POYNTER.—That is surely ancient history.

Mr. LAVELLE.—It is something that the people should be continually reminded of. The Prime Minister and Treasurer's trip will never be recorded in history, because it is a matter of so little importance; but the spending of £10,000 in that way is a matter of national importance. The most noticeable thing I read of in connexion with the Treasurer's trip was that he had drunk a cocktail while in America, and threatened to win the

war with one hand and kneeling if he got another drink. The sum of £10,000 was spent on that trip, and £1,500 on Senator Pearce's trip. I do not know what was spent on Mr. Watt's trip, but I earnestly hope we shall hear something about that event tomorrow. Senator E. D. Millen is now on his way to Europe to attend a Conference, which, we are told, is not going to take place, and also to re-organize Australia House. If Australia House and the High Commissioner's Office are to be re-organized, the work should be done by the High Commissioner. If the High Commissioner is doing the work for which he is paid, and if Australia House is serving the purpose for which it was erected, there is no occasion to send Ministers over there every twelve months. If it is necessary to send Ministers there every twelve months, there is no need to saddle the people of Australia with an expenditure of over £50,000 a year to keep Australia House going. I intend to vote for the reduction moved by the honorable member for Darwin; but, as I should like to move for the total wiping out of two items prior to that, and cannot do so unless the honorable member's motion is first withdrawn, I ask him to withdraw it temporarily, to enable me to submit an amendment.

MR. BELL.—I ask leave to temporarily withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. LAVELLE (Calare) [9.15].—There is an item of £300 for a publicity officer, being the salary for portion of the year only. I cannot see any necessity for paying a publicity officer to advertise the activities of the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) and his Department. The right honorable gentleman is his own best publicity officer. What the other duties of the officer are I do not know, but the expenditure seems to me to be entirely unnecessary. I am not certain whether the officer is employed only at election time or permanently. In any case, I move—

That the item, "Publicity Officer, £300," be omitted from division 13.

Question put. The Committee divided.

Ayes	10
Noes	21

Majority	..	11
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Bell, G. J.
Blakeley, A.
Brennan, F.
Gabb, J. M.
Gregory, H.
Lavelle, T. J.

Bamford, F. W.
Blundell, R. P.
Cameron, D. C.
Cook, Sir Joseph
Corser, E. B. C.
Foster, Richard
Gibson, W. G.
Greene, W. M.
Higgs, W. G.
Lister, J. H.
Mackay, G. H.

Anstey, F.
Charlton, M.
Considine, M. P.
Fenton, J. E.
Maloney, Dr.
Mahon, H.
Mahony, W. G.
Makin, N. J. O.
Mathews, J.
McDonald, C.
McGrath, D. C.
Moloney, Parker
Nicholls, S. R.
Ryan, T. J.
Stewart, P. G.
Tudor, F. G.
Watkins, D.
West, J. E.

AYES.

McWilliams, W. J.
Riley, E.

Tellers:

Cunningham, L. L.
Lazzarini, H. P.

NOES.

Marr, C. W. C.
Page, Dr. Earle
Page, James
Payton, A.
Ryrie, Sir Granville
Smith, Laird
Wienholt, A.
Wise, G. H.

Tellers:

Burchell, R. J.
Story, W. H.

PAIRS.

Watt, W. A.
Bayley, J. G.
Best, Sir Robert
Bowden, E. K.
Chapman, Austin
Fleming, W. M.
Fowler, J. M.
Francis, F. H.
Groom, L. E.
Hughes, W. M.
Jackson, D. S.
Lamond, Hector
Livingston, J.
Marks, W. M.
Maxwell, G. A.
Bruce, S. M.
Rodgers, A. S.
Jowett, E.

Amendment negatived.

Question so resolved in the negative.

MR. LAVELLE (Calare) [9.24].—I see an item of £4,000 for "relief of loyalist workers in connexion with the maritime strike." I have never give any assistance or countenance to so-called loyalists. I would call them by another name if the Standing Orders permitted me to do so. I shall never give them any quarter, and I do not intend to assist the Government to spend even £1 of the people's money on these loyalists, because such expenditure is an injustice to the men who were engaged in that industrial upheaval, and also the people generally. I shall always be opposed to any help being given to loyalists in any shape or form. I therefore move—

That the item, "Relief of Loyalist Workers, Maritime Strike, £4,000," be omitted from division 13.

MR. BLAKELEY (Darling) [9.25].—I also am opposed to voting any sum for the

inculcation of the principles of non-unionism in the minds of the people of this country. This item relates to a period when trade unionism in Australia was jeopardized by the actions of the present Government. We know perfectly well that the Government formed "scab" organizations all over Australia for the purpose of breaking up trade unionism—a futile endeavour, as those who are acquainted with unionism in Australia must know—and it was done at the expense principally of unionists, because, after all, they are the people who bear the main burden of taxation. The present Government have made repeated attempts to smash unionism at the behest of the employers' organizations. No matter how much money it may spend, no Government has the slightest hope of accomplishing that aim.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—Nobody desires to do that.

Mr. BLAKELEY. — The present Government have tried very hard indeed. They formed "scab" organizations in Victoria, and individual members of the Ministry travelled the country in advocacy of them. Similar bodies were brought into existence in South Australia, Western Australia, and New South Wales, and were heavily subsidized by the Commonwealth and State Governments. In New South Wales over £1,000,000 was spent by the Nationalist Government at the behest of the employers in endeavouring to smash trade unionism. Now the Committee is asked to agree to an item of £4,000 for the relief of "loyalists." Notwithstanding all the money spent by the present Commonwealth Government and other Nationalist Governments, and all the efforts which have been made by such Governments, both individually and collectively, trade unionism is probably in a stronger position to-day than ever before in its history. I object to any public money being spent on men who would "scab" on their fellow-workers by taking the jobs of men who were fighting for principles, and I protest against any Government spending money which should be spent by the employing class, if it is to be spent at all. The Committee should reject this item, because it is a blow directed at trade unionism generally.

Mr. GABB (Angas) [9.29].—I also oppose this item. The word "loyalist," used as it is here, is alone sufficient to incite one to opposition. To whom were the men loyal? Certainly not to their own class, and therefore not to their own interests. That is proved by the fact that we hear of complaints by them that they have been pushed into the background by the very Government who made use of them. I hope that those honorable members who at one time were members of the Labour party will show where they stand in regard to unionism. Will they support this amendment, or have they so far fallen away from the principles which, as prominent trade unionists they held at one time, that they will vote for a financial grant to help individuals who proved false to their own class?

Sir JOSEPH COOK (Parramatta—Treasurer) [9.30].—Last year a grant of £33,000 was made for the relief of distress caused by the maritime strike.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—Do not forget that you "gagged" the Estimates through last year.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—The honorable member did not object to that item being "gagged" through.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—How could we help it?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—That was an item of £33,000 granted for the relief of families of unionist workers—the actual unionist strikers.

Mr. JAMES PAGE.—That is too thin.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—It may be thin, but it is the truth; that is all. This is an item of £4,000 by way of payment to these men, because they were dispossessed of their work as the outcome of an arrangement by which they all left the wharfs in order that the unionists might take their places.

Mr. LAZZARINI (Werriwa) [9.33].—To my mind, the payment of an item of this kind amounts to deliberate dishonesty. In their efforts to get men to fill the places of the unionists, and to break down trade unionism, the Government had to offer something a long way in advance of the claims which the unionists themselves had made before going out on strike. The Treasurer (Sir Joseph

Cook) now says that, because these individuals had to leave the wharfs, they are to be compensated. Thank God, at any rate, that there are not sufficient men of this type in Australia to adequately take the place of striking trade unionists.

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—This is a matter which, if I were in the honorable member's place, I would leave severely alone.

Mr. LAZZARINI.—I am not prepared to leave it alone, and would not be even if it had to do with the disbursement of £1, let alone £4,000. I want no advice from the Treasurer. A recommendation coming from him has no interest for me or for the movement which I represent. I desire to register my protest against this proposal to make the taxpayers at large compensate beings who would have taken the bread and butter out of the mouths of the wives and little ones of true unionists.

Mr. BRENNAN (Batman) [9.35].—I have a fairly lively recollection of the history of this matter, and I think that this item of £4,000 ought to be paid out of the funds of the National party.

Mr. BLAKELEY.—Which really is the Employers Federation?

Mr. BRENNAN.—I remember how, on the steps of this very House, I and other Labour members met hundreds of these men. Some of them actually sought interviews with Labour representatives to put to them the justice of their claim. They held that they had been persuaded by the Government, upon certain promises, to undertake work on the wharfs. But, they said that, as soon as the Government found the position impracticable, and their stand untenable, they disregarded their undertakings. Thus, these so-called loyalists found themselves left in the lurch, penniless, and dependent upon charity. I was actually interviewed, together with others, on the steps of this House, by numbers of men who pathetically put their position to me. I pointed out, as was only natural, that we of the Labour party could scarcely be expected to feel very warm sympathy for those who had—to use that expressive but somewhat vulgar term—"scabbed" on their comrades in that great industrial upheaval, when all the forces of the Commonwealth Government were employed to support

their friends against the recognised members of labour unions. But there certainly was a measure of justice in their claim, and I cannot help recognising it. However, I see no reason now why the unions, having so long supported their unemployed unionist comrades—save for that small measure of assistance to which the Treasurer has alluded, and which the Labour party succeeded in wresting from the Government—should now be called upon, as members of the community generally, to support the friends of the Government. I maintain that the Government party ought to make compensation themselves. They should look after their own friends, and pay them out of their own pockets, and not place the burden upon the taxpayers.

Question.—That the item "Relief of loyalist workers, £4,000," be struck out,—put. The Committee divided.

Ayes	9
Noes	25

Majority	16
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AYES.

Blakeley, A.	Page, James
Brennan, F.	Tudor, F. G.
Cunningham, L. L.	Tellers:
Gabb, J. M.	Lazzarini, H. P.
Lavelle, T. J.	Riley, E.

NOES.

Atkinson, L.	Lister, J. H.
Bamford, F. W.	Mackay, G. H.
Bell, G. J.	Marr, C. W. C.
Blundell, R. P.	McWilliams, W. J.
Cameron, D. C.	Page, Dr. Earle
Cook, Sir Joseph	Poynton, A.
Corser, E. B. C.	Ryrie, Sir Granville
Foster, Richard	Smith, Laird
Gibson, W. G.	Wienholt, A.
Greene, W. M.	Wise, G. H.
Gregory, H.	Tellers:
Higgs, W. G.	Burchell, R. J.
Jowett, E.	Story, W. H.

PAIRS.

Anstey, F.	Watt, W. A.
West, J. E.	Bayley, J. G.
Maloney, Dr.	Best, Sir Robert
Mahon, H.	Bowden, E. K.
Stewart, P. G.	Chapman, Austin
Watkins, D.	Fleming, W. M.
Mahony, W. G.	Fowler, J. M.
Makin, N. J. O.	Francis, F. H.
Nicholls, S. R.	Groom, L. E.
McGrath, D. C.	Hughes, W. M.
Charlton, M.	Jackson, D. S.
Mathews, J.	Lamond, Hector
Considine, M. P.	Livingston, J.
Catts, J. H.	Marks, W. M.
Moloney, Parker	Maxwell, G. A.
McDonald, C.	Bruce, S. M.
Ryan, T. J.	Rodgers, A. S.

Question so resolved in the negative.
Amendment negatived.

Mr. LAVELLE (Calare) [9.45].—I desire to call attention to the item, "Contribution to cost of Secretariat—League of Nations, £15,000." I suppose honorable members will be surprised at my action in moving that this item be deleted. But whilst I agree with the ideal of a League of Nations, I cannot stand for the League as it exists to-day. If we had a League of Nations in the true sense of the term, and if it were taking effective steps to prevent future wars, to bring about a reduction of armaments, or to abolish militarism and conscription in the different countries of the world, I should be found supporting it. But although we have fought the war which was to end wars, although we have a League of Nations which was intended to maintain peace in the true sense of the word, we find that the world to-day is in a greater state of turmoil than it ever was before. There are more wars raging to-day than were ever previously waged in the world's history. I notice from the cables in the daily newspapers that at a recent meeting of the League of Nations the fact was disclosed that it did not possess sufficient money with which to pay its cigar bill.

Mr. LAZZARINI.—It was a pretty tall bill, too.

Mr. LAVELLE.—Yes. It amounted to £3,200, I think. Believing, as I do, that the League is an ineffective instrument for the maintenance of peace amongst the nations, I object to the expenditure, and move—

That the item, "Contribution to cost of Secretariat, League of Nations, £15,000," be omitted.

Mr. TUDOR (Yarra) [9.47].—I should like the Treasurer to tell us whether we are not committed to this amount. Is this the item to which the honorable member for Franklin (Mr. McWilliams) referred when he said that we would be posted as defaulters unless we paid it?

Sir JOSEPH COOK.—This is the amount, and it has been paid.

Mr. TUDOR.—We had a right to pay it. I am sure the honorable member for

Calare (Mr. Lavelle) will admit that, having regard to the fact that we have entered the League of Nations.

Mr. LAVELLE.—I object to useless expenditure, irrespective of whether the amount has been paid or not.

Mr. TUDOR.—Seeing that we joined the League, we have a right to give proper notice before withdrawing from it.

Amendment negatived.

Amendment (by Mr. BELL) proposed—

That the proposed vote, "High Commissioner's Office, £53,974," be reduced by £8,851.

Question put. The Committee divided.

Ayes	14
Noes	20

Majority	6
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AYES.

Bell, G. J.
Blakeley, A.
Brennan, F.
Gabb, J. M.
Gibson, W. G.
Gregory, H.
Jowett, E.
Lavelle, T. J.

Lazzarini, H. P.
McWilliams, W. J.
Dr. Earle Page
Wienscholt, A.

Tellers:

Cunningham, L. L.
Riley, E.

NOES.

Atkinson, L.
Bamford, F. W.
Blundell, R. P.
Cameron, D. C.
Cook, Sir Joseph
Corser, E. B. C.
Foster, Richard
Greene, W. M.
Higgs, W. G.
Lister, J. H.
Mackay, G. H.

Marr, C. W. C.
Page, James
Poynton, A.
Ryrie, Sir Granville
Smith, Laird
Tudor, F. G.
Wise, G. H.

Tellers:

Burchell, R. J.
Story, W. H.

PAIRS.

Anstey, F.
West, J. E.
Maloney, Dr.
Mahon, H.
Stewart, P. G.
Watkins, D.
Mahony, W. G.
Makin, N. J. O.
Nicholls, S. R.
McGrath, D. C.
Charlton, M.
Mathews, J.
Considine, M. P.
Catts, J. H.
Moloney, Parker
McDonald, C.
Ryan, T. J.

Watt, W. A.
Bayley, J. G.
Best, Sir Robert
Bowden, E. K.
Chapman, Austin
Fleming, W. M.
Fowler, J. M.
Francis, F. H.
Groom, L. E.
Hughes, W. M.
Jackson, D. S.
Lamond, Hector
Livingston, J.
Marks, W. M.
Maxwell, G. A.
Bruce, S. M.
Rodgers, A. S.

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. GREGORY (Dampier) [9.55].—It will be noticed that the expenditure last year for "stationery, travelling, and incidental expenses," in connexion with the High Commissioner's Office was £4,500. This year it is anticipated that it will be £5,000. I think that we might well reduce that item by £500. Then the total proposed vote upon the High Commissioner's Office is altogether beyond what it should be. We ought, therefore, to emphasize the fact that we desire economy to be exercised. Last year the upkeep for Australia House amounted to £9,000. I think that that amount may well be reduced by £4,000. Consequently I move—

That the item, "Stationery, travelling and incidental expenses, £4,500," be reduced by £500, and that the item, "Upkeep of Australia House, £9,000," be reduced by £4,000.

Sir JOSEPH COOK (Parramatta—Treasurer) [9.56].—I hope the Committee will not agree to this amendment. I have already given details of expenditure in connexion with the High Commissioner's Office. We cannot help the cost of services rising. That is rendered inevitable by the increase in the cost of commodities.

Question put. The Committee divided.

Ayes	14
Noes	19
Majority	5

AYES.

Bell, G. J.	Lazzarini, H. P.
Blakeley, A.	McWilliams, W. J.
Cunningham, L. L.	Page, Dr. Earle
Gabb, J. M.	Wienholt, A.
Gibson, W. G.	
Gregory, H.	<i>Tellers:</i>
Jowett, E.	Brennan, F.
Lavelle, T. J.	Riley, E.

NOES.

Bamford, F. W.	Marr, C. W. C.
Blundell, R. P.	Page, James
Cameron, D. C.	Poynton, A.
Cook, Sir Joseph	Ryrie, Sir Granville
Corser, E. B. C.	Smith, Laird
Foster, Richard	Tudor, F. G.
Greene, W. M.	Wise, G. H.
Higgs, W. G.	<i>Tellers:</i>
Lister, J. H.	Burchell, R. J.
Mackay, G. H.	Story, W. H.

PAIRS.

Anstey, F.	Watt, W. A.
West, J. E.	Bayley, J. G.
Maloney, Dr.	Best, Sir Robert
Mahon, H.	Bowden, E. K.
Stewart, P. G.	Chapman, Austin
Watkins, D.	Fleming, W. M.
Mahony, W. G.	Fowler, J. M.
Makin, N. J. O.	Francis, F. H.
Nicholls, S. R.	Groom, L. E.
McGrath, D. C.	Hughes, W. M.
Charlton, M.	Jackson, D. S.
Mathews, J.	Lamond, Hector
Considine, M. P.	Livingston, J.
Catts, J. H.	Marks, W. M.
Moloney, Parker	Maxwell, G. A.
McDonald, C.	Bruce, S. M.
Ryan, T. J.	Rodgers, A. S.

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. RICHARD FOSTER (Wakefield) [10.2].—I desire to say that if the honorable member for Dampier (Mr. Gregory) had moved to reduce the vote for the High Commissioner's Office by £500 I should have supported him; but I am not going to follow any honorable member who makes a proposal of the kind, and does not reasonably show from which items the money should be deducted. But I rose mainly to say that, personally, I am very dissatisfied with the information, or rather the absence of information, about the expenditure at Australia House. With the kindest intentions, I say that, in regard to this expenditure, we have a special claim to know the fullest details. As to the expenditure in any or every part of Australia, we can get the necessary information from the representatives of the States affected; but that, of course, is not so in the case of expenditure in London; and, therefore, the Government ought to give us every detail of the latter. It is well known to be the intention of the Government to re-organize the London Office, and I hope that my suggestion will be borne in mind.

Proposed vote agreed to.

Progress reported.

WAR SERVICE HOMES BILL.

Assent reported.

House adjourned at 10.6 p.m.

Members of the House of Representatives.

Speaker—The Honorable Sir Elliot Johnson, K.C.M.G.—

Chairman of Committees—The Honorable John Moore Chanter.

Anstey, Frank ..	Bourke (V.)	Jackson, David Sydney ..	Bass (T.)
³ Atkinson, Llewelyn ..	Wilmot (T.)	Johnson, Hon. Sir Elliot, Lang, (N.S.W.)	K.C.M.G.
⁷ Bamford, Hon. Frederick	Herbert (Q.)	Jowett, Edmund ..	Grampians (V.)
William		⁵ Kerby, Edwin Thomas	Ballarat (V.)
Bayley, James Garfield ..	Oxley (Q.)	John	
Bell, George John, C.M.G.,	Darwin (T.)	Lamond, Hector ..	Illawarra (N.S.W.)
D.S.O.		Lavelle, Thomas James ..	Calare (N.S.W.)
Best, Hon. Sir Robert	Kooyong (V.)	Lazzarini, Hubert Peter ..	Werriwa (N.S.W.)
Wallace, K.C.M.G.		Lister, John Henry ..	Corio (V.)
Blakeley, Arthur ..	Darling (N.S.W.)	Livingston, John ..	Barker (S.A.)
Blundell, Hon. Reginald	Adelaide (S.A.)	Mackay, George Hugh ..	Lilley (Q.)
Pole		Mahon, Hon. Hugh ..	Kalgoorlie (W.A.)
Bowden, Eric Kendall ..	Nepean (N.S.W.)	Mahony, William George	Dalley (N.S.W.)
Brennan, Frank ..	Batman (V.)	Makin, Norman John	Hindmarsh (S.A.)
Bruce, Stanley Melbourne,	Flinders (V.)	Oswald	
M.C.		Maloney, William ..	Melbourne (V.)
Burchell, Reginald John,	Fremantle (W.A.)	Marks, Walter Moffitt ..	Wentworth (N.S.W.)
M.C.		Marr, Charles William	Parkes (N.S.W.)
Cameron, Donald Charles,	Brisbane (Q.)	Clanan, D.S.O., M.C.	
C.M.G., D.S.O.		Mathews, James ..	Melbourne Ports (V.)
Catts, James Howard ..	Cook (N.S.W.)	Maxwell, George Arnot ..	Fawkner (V.)
Chanter, Hon. John	Riverina (N.S.W.)	¹ McDonald, Hon. Charles ..	Kennedy (Q.)
Moore		⁶ McGrath, David Charles ..	Ballarat (V.)
Chapman, Hon. Austin ..	Eden-Monaro	McWilliams, William James	Franklin (T.)
	(N.S.W.)	Moloney, Parker John ..	Hume (N.S.W.)
² Charlton, Matthew† ..	Hunter (N.S.W.)	Nicholls, Samuel Robert ..	Macquarie (N.S.W.)
⁴ Considine, Michael Patrick	Barrier (N.S.W.)	Page, Earle Christmas	Cowper (N.S.W.)
Cook, Right Hon. Sir	Parramatta (N.S.W.)	Grafton	
Joseph, P.C., G.C.M.G.		Page, Hon. James ..	Maranoa (Q.)
Cook, Robert ..	Indi (V.)	Poynton, Hon. Alexander,	Grey (S.A.)
Corser, Edward Bernard	Wide Bay (Q.)	O.B.E.	
Cresset		Prowse, John Henry ..	Swan (W.A.)
Cunningham, Lucien	Gwydir (N.S.W.)	Riley, Edward ..	South Sydney
Lawrence			(N.S.W.)
Fenton, James Edward ..	Maribyrnong (V.)	Rodgers, Hon. Arthur Stan-	Wannon (V.)
³ Fleming, William Mont-	Robertson (N.S.W.)	islaus	
gomerie		Ryan, Hon. Thomas	West Sydney
Foster, Hon. Richard	Wakefield (S.A.)	Joseph, K.C.	(N.S.W.)
Witty		Ryrie, Sir Granville de	North Sydney
² Fowler, Hon. James	Perth (W.A.)	Laune, K.C.M.G., C.B.	(N.S.W.)
Mackinnon		Smith, Hon. William	Denison (T.)
Francis, Frederick Henry	Henty (V.)	Henry Laird	
Gabb, Joel Moses ..	Angas (S.A.)	Stewart, Percy Gerald ..	Wimmera (V.)
Gibson, William Gerrand	Corangamite (V.)	Story, William Harrison ..	Boothby (S.A.)
Greene, Hon. Walter	Richmond (N.S.W.)	Tudor, Hon. Frank Gwynne	Yarra (V.)
Massy		³ Watkins, Hon. David ..	Newcastle (N.S.W.)
Gregory, Hon. Henry ..	Dampier (W.A.)	Watt, Right Hon. William	Balaclava (V.)
Groom, Hon. Littleton	Darling Downs (Q.)	Alexander, P.C.	
Ernest		West, John Edward ..	East Sydney
Hay, Alexander ..	New England		(N.S.W.)
	(N.S.W.)	Wienholt, Arnold ..	Moreton (Q.)
Higgs, Hon. William Guy	Capricornia (Q.)	Wise, Hon. George Henry ..	Gippsland (V.)
Hill, William Caldwell ..	Echuca (V.)		
Hughes, Right Hon. William	Bendigo (V.)		
Morris, P.C., K.C.			

1. Sworn 27th February, 1920.—2. Sworn 3rd March, 1920.—3. Appointed Temporary Chairman of Committees, 4th March, 1920.—4. Made affirmation, 5th March, 1920.—5. Election declared void, 2nd June, 1920.—† Sworn 11th May, 1920.—6. Elected 10th July, 1920. Sworn 21st July, 1920.
7. Appointed Temporary Chairman of Committees, 13th May, 1920.

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